FILLING IN THE GAPS FOR OLD SCHOOL GAMERS

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Undead

Fall
2012
Issue 2

Undead Familiars:
Is That a Moldy Crow on Yer Shoulder?

Death is Personal: Individualizing Undead
Tips for making **unique** undead

Undead Unlimited!
Are undead **overrunning** your campaign?

The Valley of Eternal Rest
A collaborative **Adventure** for your campaign!

BONUS ARTICLE

The House of Ponce, Bank and Moneylender
A safe place for adventurers to store their **loot**

Ajari, Kenku-Lich
Not your average **undead** bird

And-Mag.com

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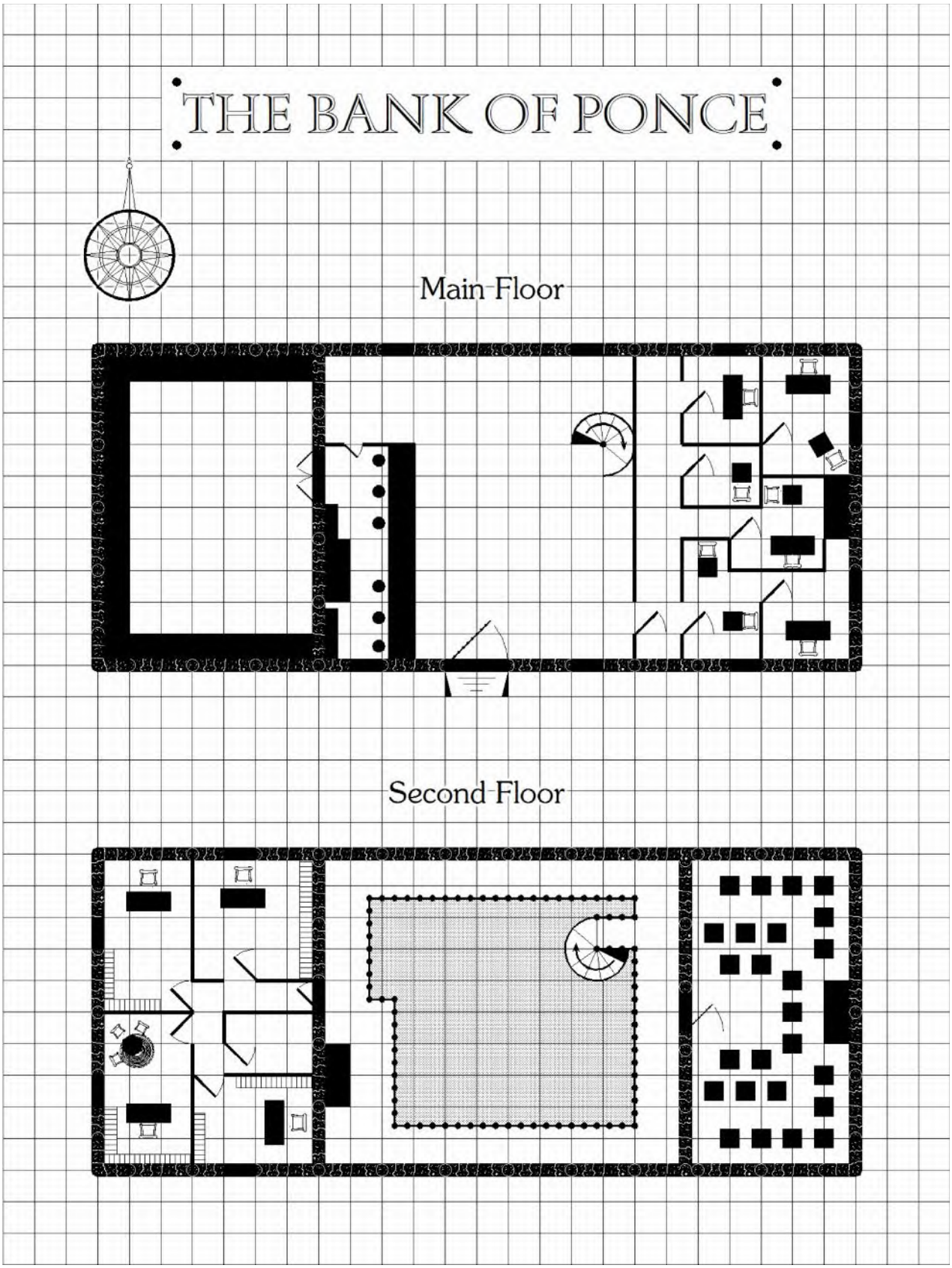
Map by Andreas Clarens



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This month's cover artist is Geoff Zitzmann, an information systems professional in Raleigh, NC. Geoff played D&D eons ago and has been an artist for many years. **&** Magazine is, however, his first foray into fantasy art.

In addition to the cover art, which was inspired by the article *Undead Familiars*, Geoff's art enhances two of our regular columns, *Creature Feature II: Failed Lich* and *Featured Fiction: An Errand*.

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Tread Softly

by Nicole Massey

Thoughts from the publisher

Welcome back, folks, for those returning to our pages. We appreciate all of you readers, and we hope you found some useful stuff in our first issue. As for those new to us, welcome, and we hope you find a lot of good stuff here within. We would love to hear from you, so send letters to our letters@and-mag.com address with your thoughts on the issue and last issue as well.

Ah, undead. They're a fixture of the game, from the lowly skeleton of a mouse or an animated bird to the most powerful lich, vampire, or infernal being from the lower planes. But someone must be stamping them out in a factory somewhere, as none of them have much individuality. TSR explored this some with module *I6: Ravenloft*, but in general they're all the same foe in duplicate – the only thing varying is the hit points. Thanks to a suggestion by one of our staff I worked up a little article on making your undead a lot more interesting, and this one also gives you a look at our friendly Halfling thief, Tom Barman, (remember him last time with his ogre friend in the pre-assembled adventure packs article?), this time very early in his career.

One of the big issues for players is the loss of levels from the touch of certain undead. We offer up other ideas on this controversial topic, so players can better handle when their character loses life force.

Andrew Hamilton also gives us an interesting article on undead familiars, which continues the trend of powering up familiars. These are some creepy critters. And speaking of creepy critters, how about hitting your players with something that they think is undead but isn't? Check out the Bone Guardian.

You may also notice a new column: *Friend or Foe*. This is where we publish interesting NPC's to hinder or help your players. You won't see the ultra-powerful here, as that's been done already, but the goal is to provide some well-developed personalities to add color and life to the game. This is just the first of the new columns, so keep an eye out, Vecna, because more is coming soon.

And what is that in the center of the issue? That would be our first adventure module, *&1: The Valley of Eternal Rest*, your very own necropolis. Use it as a single big adventure or split the individual tombs out and use them separately as you need them. We hope to have more coming like it, including a big one next issue, *&2: Rage from the Waves*.

I've been discussing this with a lot of folks, and I'm going to weigh in on a controversy here. I first got interested in this thought when I ran into Richard Hernande's *Animate Dead Animals* spell for druids. (published in *The Dragon*, November 1988) Something about that set me very wrong. I admit to having a bias toward druids, but it seemed off that a class so devoted to nature would have such a spell – since it creates unnatural creatures, and is, to my thinking anathema to what druids stand for. This led me to the other point. Druids can turn undead. It is more natural for them to have this power than clerics, as they once again are forcing out something unnatural. (But I can also understand how the unholy is affected by clerics of good alignment). Furthermore, it's been said by E. Gary Gygax that he intended them to have this power, so I have no problem accepting that as the way it is.

Allow me to diverge from the issue here for a bit so I can talk about something else going on. Excepting those of you who live in caves or have been out adventuring for the last six months, I'm sure just about everyone has found out that Wizards of the Coast has announced that they're going to do a new version of the game they call Dungeons & Dragons. In fact they're doing a wide release beta playtest of it now as you read this. I know this is a hot topic for a lot of our readers, and many who read this have very strong views on the versions that

best reflect their image of the game. But this new edition, often called fifth edition, has a new aspect to it. Wizards wasn't shy about mentioning in press that 4th edition was using concepts from *World of Warcraft*. Though some folks liked this approach, I've seen a lot more venom about it than praise. One of the contentions I've seen many times is that 4th edition is too easy – character death is as impossible as a first edition level 2 monk defeating Tiamat with one arm tied behind his back. This and other factors have spurred what is referred to as the OSR, and this is where I think it comes into our territory. OSR stands for *Old School Renaissance* or *Old School Revival*, though one person on the Usenet newsgroup rec.games.frp.dnd said it stands for "Oh, sh**, run!" In his opinion this reflects the reality of earlier systems where sometimes you couldn't just stay and fight it out with a chance of defeating every foe, and sometimes it was appropriate to book foot out of there and live to breathe another day. The fact that this is novel to some gamers speaks volumes of where our hobby has gone down the line, as I'm sure many of you can understand. But the pendulum is swinging back in our direction, and though I won't even begin to hope that we'll see new first edition material from them, if folks are playing things more compatible with our version then we can hopefully have an easier time converting things to our particular game.

Oh, wait, they are releasing something first edition related – in fact, they already have. The Premier editions of the first edition *Monster Manual*, *Player's Handbook*, and *Dungeon Master's Guide* came out in mid-July. These books are the text of the original books with new art and covers, and they're helping to fund the *E. Gary Gygax Memorial Foundation*. This is a shining opportunity to prove to the powers that be at Wizards that we still exist.

All of this development has gotten me thinking, though. *Wizards of the Coast* holds a lot of intellectual property (IP) that they aren't getting any benefit from. If I were running things there I'd make all of it available through online sources, and then run a big contest. Convert a dungeon from one version to another and the winners for each one will get a free copy of the book of all of these conversions when it comes out. This book would include conversions of every module, from ones released soon for 5th edition back to the first one ever released, and with versions for every iteration of the game from the original digest sized boxed set to the current stuff. This book would have appeal for players of every edition of the game, and would also drive sales of the modules online, thereby leveraging their IP in a way no game manufacturer ever did in the past. And all it would take is an employee who coordinated this all and some well-respected judges for each edition to decide which ones won the award for that edition. This one move would open vast resources up to anyone playing any version of D&D and provide the "one book to rule them all, one book to find them." It seems pretty win/win to me, and it would breathe new life into a lot of product. And we'd be able to buy first edition modules again, too.

Just a thought. Maybe someone at Wizards will read this issue and sell this idea to someone there. I can dream, can't I?

Adventurer's Obituary

by Jeremy Dow

Talmina, beloved dungeon engineer and explorer, recently departed from this world during an adventuring mishap with her companions.

After entering a dungeon she scouted ahead in a long corridor to check for traps, but she failed to find a trap door at her feet. She fell to the bottom of a 20-foot pit, but as her companions proceeded to let down a rope to get her out, some strange, unidentified, living goo oozed out of many holes in the walls. Talmina managed to grab the rope and start climbing, but the living ooze struck her quite skillfully, enveloping her. Her friends report that her death must have been quick because they heard no sound or scream.

Talmina leaves behind no next of kin that anyone knows of, though her adventuring companions will sorely miss her. There will be no burial.

Talmina was a PC in Jeremy's campaign.

Undead Familiars

by Andrew Hamilton

Is That a Moldy Crow on Yer Shoulder?

It's a truism that the familiar is a common accessory for magic-user's and similar archetypes in literature, although they are admittedly a less common accessory for adventuring magic-users. The familiar can be a useful companion for any spell caster, and I am of the opinion that it should mirror, at least in some ways, the magic-user with which it has bonded. That's great for your run-of-the-mill hedge mage, academic wizard, or court enchanter. However, creepy necromancers and other magic-user types who find digging up dead bodies for disturbing purposes to be completely fascinating? They definitely deserve a unique familiar. An undead familiar.

Let's be clear, I'm not talking a skeleton, or a zombie, or a ghoul. I'm talking a more "normal" familiar – some dead cat, rat or bird, something that can *almost* pass for living. This would be the crow with tattered feathers and empty eye sockets, the unusually gaunt black cat with mangy fur, the rat with a herky-jerky walk.

First of all, having a humanoid skeleton, zombie or ghoul as a familiar is pretty limiting if you ever want to interact with polite society. Second of all, why not just wear a sandwich board saying "I am irredeemably evil ... kill me!". Wandering around town with a skeleton, zombie or ghoul in tow will have every paladin, good cleric and probably druid on your tail, not to mention a crowd of right-minded citizens sharpening their swords and pitchforks preparing a pre-emptive strike. No, having a familiar that can blend in, or at least be concealed, is required. Idiots can't learn magic, and truly villainous magic-users should be intelligent enough to understand the value of stealth and subtlety.

The acquisition and creation of an undead familiar is a two part process, and can be undertaken only by a magic-user of 5th level or greater. The creepy magic-user needs to summon a familiar (as per the 1st level **Find Familiar** spell), and then ritually kill the poor creature and animate it (through the 3rd level spell **Animate Familiar**, described below). The spell absolutely will not work on special familiars (quasits, imps, pseudo-dragons, etc.) and casting the **Animate Familiar** spell is absolutely an evil act. Good and neutral magic users cannot use this spell without suffering an alignment change.

Animate Familiar

Necromancy
Level: Magic-User 3
Range: 0
Duration: Permanent
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 day
Saving Throw: none
Area of Effect: one familiar

This spell is an evil spell which can be cast only by a magic-user on a familiar that has already been bonded with him (as per the 1st level **Find Familiar** spell). The familiar is ritually slain, and then animated. The magic of the ritual prevents the magic-user from suffering the consequences of a familiar being killed; but this protection is in force only for the duration of the ritual. The animation process allows the undead familiar to retains its mental capacity, as well as its personality. Over time it will gain in mental capacity (adding +1 Intelligence after 10 years of unlife, and another +1 Intelligence point after an additional 40 years of unlife).

The undead familiar will begin to abandon many of the mannerisms and habits they had while alive. For example, after a few years an undead cat will give up grooming, and a raven or crow will stop preening.

The process of decay is dramatically slowed, so that the familiar will not lose its fur or feathers and become a skeleton with rotten bits of meat and skin hanging off of it. Instead it will become an emaciated creature, with dull, lifeless eyes. They often carry a faint odor of decay or rot with them, and their presence

unnerves normal animals, which will not attack an undead familiar unless they have no other choice. The undead familiar is unsanitary however, and any wound that they cause has a 10% chance of becoming infected (as per the disease caused by a giant rat).

The undead familiar gains many of the benefits that are shared by most undead, including immunity to **Sleep**, **Charm**, cold (magical or otherwise), and poison. They are also immune to the special attacks of other undead (e.g. paralysis, level draining, stench, aging, fear), although they are certainly vulnerable to physical attacks. Being undead, they have no body heat, and thus are effectively invisible to infravision. The link to the Negative Material Plane that animates and preserves the undead familiar also makes it resistant to normal weapons; silver or magical weapons are required to harm the undead familiar. As well, undead familiars suffer only 1/2 damage from piercing weapons, as they no longer has vulnerable, functioning internal organs.

Undead familiars are vulnerable to turning however, although they are turned as an undead creature with a number of hit dice equal to their master's level. While they can be turned, undead familiars are not subject to the dispelling/destruction ("D") result. Any such result should be treated as turning. Undead familiars also have the same saving throws as their masters.

The undead familiar gains hit point bonuses; +1 hp/3 caster levels. Thus the undead familiar of a 3rd level magic user gains +1 hp. The undead familiar of an 6th level necromancer gains +2 hp, +3 hp with a 9th level caster, etc., with no practical limit to the hit point bonus. The magic-user also gains bonus hit points, as per the **Find Familiar** spell, but these bonus hit points are calculated from the base hit points (i.e. 2 to 4 hit points) of the familiar, not the adjusted hit points. Similarly, if the undead familiar is destroyed, the magic-user suffers only damage based on the base hit points of the familiar, not the augmented hit points.

It should be noted that an undead familiar will survive the transformation of its master from a living being into a lich.

The undead familiar generally retains the senses that it had in life, with a few exceptions. They become far more sensitive to the smell of blood and carrion, able to detect it at twice the distance that they would have in life. The undead familiar also becomes less sensitive to heat and cold, more sensitive to bright light, and loses its sense of taste.

The material components for this spell are an altar consecrated to an evil deity (of the spell caster's faith), an obsidian knife, a ceremonial bowl, and a black silk sheet to wrap the familiar in. The material components are not consumed in the casting, but they are tainted (and will have a slight evil aura afterwards), and cannot be reused for a second **Animate Familiar** ritual. The material components will cost a minimum of 250 gp.

DM's note – there are many spells designed to augment familiars, attract more powerful familiars, etc. that have been published in various resources (*Dragon Magazine* comes to mind). If these are included in the campaign, it is recommended that the **Animate Familiar** spell not be effective on augmented or more powerful familiars.

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Make sure you include your name and email address so we can ensure you get credit for your work! See our Index page for more details and formatting guidelines.

Death is Personal: Individualizing Undead

By Nicole Massey

Tom followed Kara, Jod, and Morvin into the cemetery. He wasn't sure about the three of them yet, but at least it would give him some strength to deal with what they were facing.

It was Kara, the human woman, that talked him into joining the group. He had a hard time hearing her words with all her jewelry, her odd haircut, (a Mohawk that extended down to her waist and had all kinds of bells and other stuff woven into it) and those intense eyes of hers. "Look, we need someone with the skill to get in and out of places and open a few doors for us. Rumor has it that you have those skills, and unless my eyes deceive me you've got a tattoo on your wrist to prove it." Tom pulled the sleeve of his shirt down over it and thought that before long he needed to get some leather bracers to keep that hidden from prying eyes.

Soon after he'd met Jod and Morvin, the typical dumb warrior and the typical wandering zealot. It was the typical adventuring group spoken of in all of the tales and fables – a warrior who was big and dumb, an obsessive priest, a distracted wizard with her head in the books all the time, and a Halfling thief. Welcome to an eight-legged cliché. Still, he didn't like going into cemeteries at night. He knew too many people buried there, and he'd also heard from the guild that some things he wasn't interested in went on here, like hits and rollings.

Morvin said in his reedy countertenor, "The spirits are moving here this night." Tom rolled his eyes – Morvin always spoke like something from an old book. Tom guessed he'd spent too much time reading them in his youth. Maybe he could find a prayer or chant to clear up his pimply skin.

"Tom." It was a whisper, something faint and soft, but clear.

Tom said, "Someone just said my name. Someone's here that knows me." Kara looked back at him, her long mane whipping around and jingling the bells woven in it. She spoke words that made no sense and left no memory, and stared around them. Then she said, "Something is radiating power that way."

She pointed to the Miller crypt. Tom's heart sank, but he didn't know why.

Jod said, "Sword is hungry, wants to taste flesh." Jod always sounded like he read too many adventure scrolls, the cheap low grade paper kind. Or like he never read anything, not even his own three letter name.

Morvin said, "The spirits are moving that way. Foul denizens of vileness cavort in the night."

Tom sighed. He was a character in a cheap adventure scroll.

"Tom." It was closer. He could almost place the voice. But there was something odd about it. Which one of his friends was stupid enough to wander around here in the cemetery? One as stupid as he was, he realized. But at least he was getting paid for it, because the mayor was concerned that people were disappearing around the graveyard. Still, maybe there were other teams out here.

Jod turned and headed for the Miller crypt, his armor clattering like flatware in a wash basin. This was the noisiest bunch of people Tom ever met. He followed, moving from shadow to shadow behind them. At least he wasn't Mister Obvious.

"Tom!"

Tom turned to find where the sound was coming from and came face to face with Bobalindian Miller, his best friend until a year ago when Bob got bit by an adder in his sleep.

Tom, in shock, said, "Bob?"

Bob said, "Yeah, it's me. Tomasell Barman, What are you doing here? This is a bad place to be tonight."

Tom looked at him. His skin was pale white, and his eyes were a sickly pink instead of the blue Tom remembered. Even Bob's hair was white, and his breath stank as if something died in his mouth.

Then tom saw the teeth, jagged and sharp.

Tom said, "Bob, you're dead, and you've become something."

He replied, "Yeah, but it isn't so bad once you get used to eating your friends and folk you know."

Bob reached out and grabbed Tom. Tom felt the burn of something vile as Bob circled his wrist with his fingers. He fought off a fear that would freeze his limbs and jerked his hand loose. As Tom took a couple of steps back Bob said, "Sorry, Tom, and I'm going to hate having to do this to such a good guy as you."

Tom then noticed that Bob's tongue was forked, like a snake – like that adder Bob's pop killed with the hoe in Bob's room.

Tom slid his dagger out of his wrist sheath and slashed at Bob. Oozing white ichor seeped from a wound on Bob's left hand as he said, "Tom? What'd you do that for? We're friends!"

Tom said, "Not anymore, Bob, you're dead. You're some sort of undead. And I'm not your bedtime snack."

Behind him Tom heard Morvin say, "Leave and never return, vile denizen of the stygian darkness! In the name of Enki I command you to leave!"

Bob shrank back, then smiled. "Stupid human. I don't fear your god. My, you look tasty." Bob stepped away from Tom.

As Bob lunged for Morvin Tom dropped to his knees. He felt a burning in his veins, the poison going to work on him.

A clatter of chain mail preceded the whoosh of a sword blade, and then the brawny warrior was on Bob like Tom's little sister going after second breakfast. Bob shrieked as his head was cut from its shoulders, and then Kara said, "We got to get out of here, there's a whole pack of them."

Morvin said, "Ghouls. Vile eaters of the dead."

Tom dropped to the ground, gasping out, "He poisoned me. Help." Then everything went black.

Tom awoke to Kara leaning over him and mopping his brow in his own bedroom. His throat dry he asked, "What happened?"

"It was a whole pod of ghouls. Morvin called in his order and they went in and cleaned them out. But since we found them first we got paid. I'm afraid your share is a bit light, since we had to pay the healers to cast a spell on you to save your life, but I guess being a little poorer is better than being dead."

"I feel like someone ran the pigs over me for a couple of hours."

"Yeah, adder poison is bad. The Clerics say that sometimes the undead keep aspects of what killed them. We got you to a healer in time."

Tom leaned up, still dizzy, and said, "Thanks for saving me."

Kara smiled and shook her head. "Jod says you're light. Of course he'd say that, he likes to show off. But we had to save you, you're a part of our adventuring group."

Tom suppressed a chuckle at a woman with six earrings in each ear, a long Mohawk with bells woven in it, six necklaces, and more bracelets and rings than the pawnbroker was holding loans on commenting that someone else was a showoff. But at least he did feel like he was a part of their group now.

Tom said, "Bob?"

"Jod killed him. He wasn't your friend anymore, Tom."

"I know. Still, it sucked to see him like that."

"I bet. But it could be worse, you could have my brother."

"Oh?"

"I'll tell you sometime, some time when you're well and strong again. Now, your sister is here with some food for you, along with a double helping of reproach."

Tom nodded. "That would be Hy. Yeah, she does reproach even better than her cooking. Thanks, Kara."

"Don't mention it. I'm sure you'll save me sometime too." She had no idea how true that was …

You've seen it so many times, the line in the log, "killed twelve ghouls in the graveyard." or "Cleric turned five zombies and eight skeletons." They're standard undead, generic and interchangeable, nothing to distinguish them. But those undead, every one of them, from skeleton to lich, used to be a person. Someone died or didn't die to make them exist. If course you couldn't tell that by reading the *Monster Manual*, *Fiend Folio*, or *Monster Manual II*. Players know that – after all, they've read the books too, and many of them can recite the statistics and abilities of any undead they meet.

Why should it be this way? It makes perfect sense in terms of game mechanics, but fantasy role-playing games are supposed to be a bit more complex than most games. So how about a little variety in your undead?

Profession and Skill Considerations

For those of you who read *The Dresden Files*, the most recent book at the time of this publication, *Ghost Story*, has an interesting ghost who retains all of his knowledge and skills from his life (maybe more than one, I'll let you read it if you're interested and not spoil it.).

The official party line is that ghosts are the spirits of evil people who stick around because they want to harry the living or fear the afterlife. This is a rather limited view of ghosts, and it reduces them to pale echoes of what they could be. If you open up the possibilities, that a ghost is the spirit of someone who hasn't left yet because something is holding them back, then you provide much wider possibilities for them. How about the ghost of a paladin who guards a holy font from desecration? Give him all his abilities and level capabilities and he becomes a far more powerful foe. Ditto for the spirit of a druid who lost her grove and her life to despoilers.

This goes all up and down the spectrum for undead who have retained their mental

capabilities. After all, liches have their spell capabilities and other skills, why shouldn't vampires, ghosts, ghouls, and skeletons? Everyone knows zombies have cognitive issues, so we can't expect them to do much besides shamble and occasionally cry out.

Modern vampire literature gives us a good approach to this dynamic. Undead tend to lose abilities from life if they're not used regularly, just like most skills. For each 100 years of unlife during which their skills are not used, remove one level of ability, including all benefits of that level. A ghost of a druid who started out at 9th level and spent 300 years at rest before facing a challenge would drop to 6th level, losing spells, skills, weapon proficiencies, and the ability to shapechange into animal forms. Also remember that abilities and skills that require touch may be a problem for non-corporeal beings. Beings without voice boxes can't utter command words, either.

This will dramatically change an encounter with a group of skeletons if they're skeletons of a berserker band, for example. Ghosts of spell casters can become nastier, too, and just take a moment to think of a ghoul who used to be a 12th level thief working his or her way into locked homes for dinner.

It's reasonable to think that enhanced undead are more difficult to turn, and this takes more calculation. Compare the ego score of the turning cleric or druid to that of the undead being turned, and use any difference in the undead's favor as a modifier to resist the turning. If this modifier moves the undead to a point higher on the table then it is turned as that higher type instead, again with a modifier if present to that roll. This does take some of the abilities from the cleric or druid, but also reflects the enhanced nature of the undead.

Some DM's treat the attempt to turn a group of undead as a single attempt to turn the leader. This can become nasty for a party if they're fighting a leader who has skills in motivating others in combat or other leadership situations. In addition it takes some of the variability out of undead encounters.

Remember to adjust experience point totals for these enhanced undead.

Cause of Death

It's also interesting if elements of the person's death can come through in rare cases. Assume that only 5% of all who die have this ability, though things might raise that chance, like curses and magical forms of death.

For example, imagine the party is fighting a group of zombies and then suddenly one of them bursts into flames because he or she died by fire. Bob's poison touch due to his death by adder bite is another good example. A decapitated undead can leave its head somewhere to spy on things, like the roof of a house, and direct the body anywhere within his or her field of vision. Severed hands can crawl through partially opened windows as long as the hand is within sight of its host body. The victim of a crushing death might be able to shapechange to any creature roughly his or her size. And don't forget burning or freezing touch when a monster grabs a party member.

One more thing: don't forget these things when creating a revenant to go after a party member. A revenant using its own method of destruction on the one who killed them has poetic **and** karmic justice written all over it.

Better the Devil You Know?

Using recently dead NPCs as undead can have an interesting effect. The PC will be surprised to find someone they thought dead up and around and talking. (Bob's conversation with Tom above illustrates this) This is a great way to get information to party members and run your players' characters through the emotional wringer. After all, this person they know was someone they liked, and now they're going to have to kill them. This is a really good way to put a Paladin into an interesting dilemma, too, as they have to decide to kill someone who served their god in life and was an upstanding member of the community.

Table 1: Types of Deaths and Their Potential Benefits

Death Method	Benefits	Physical Clues
Annihilation: Complete	Undead can assume any shape with the same mass of his or her original body.	Appearance like the person is in soft focus in a picture; undead has difficulty maintaining his or her shape.
Annihilation: Partial	Undead can assume any shape with the same mass of his or her original body. Any body parts not annihilated may not be transformed.	Appearance like the person is in soft focus in a picture, except for any body parts that weren't destroyed; undead has difficulty maintaining his or her shape; a body part doesn't fit the undead's current appearance
Burning	Undead has a fiery touch, equivalent in damage to a **Shocking Grasp** spell, and is resistant to fire attacks like other cold based creatures. Undead also may immolate like some demons, doing fire damage and igniting flammable objects.	Smoke rising from the undead person; severely tanned skin; body hair burned off and clothing singed
Crushing	Undead may envelop their target like a melee net on a successful hit attempt. Normal methods of getting out of the entanglement apply, as do normal penalties	The undead looks somehow malformed or damaged somehow; two-dimensionality
Decapitation	Undead may place his or her head in a safe place or good observation point and move his or her body around under the head's command within the head's field of vision. Spells with verbal components cannot be cast by the body, but any other actions that don't require speech are possible.	A ragged scar or wound around the neck of the undead; a slight empty space in the neck where flesh should be but was ripped away, so the head hovers slightly above the body
Drowning	Undead's touch introduces water into the lungs of the target unless a save is made; The undead can hit with a water based attack doing the same damage as a **Burning Hands** spell that puts out fires, waterlogs anything, and possibly damaging paper materials and causing ink to run.	Bloated appearance; the undead leaves a trail of water behind as he or she passes through an area
Falling	Undead can float above the ground to a height no greater than the distance fallen when the person fell to his or her death; The undead may fall upon a person from a height, delivering the same damage he or she suffered in his or her death fall.	The undead looks damaged; legs or torso look shorter than normal
Freezing	Undead has a frigid touch, equivalent in damage to a Shocking Grasp spell, and is resistant to fire attacks like other cold based creatures. The undead also radiates frigid cold and may freeze liquids and liquefy low freezing point gasses. Damage is as per immolation to creatures in the area of effect.	Hair looks frozen; frozen tears on the cheeks; look of rigidity, with jerky or stiff movements

Death Method	Benefits	Physical Clues
Hanging Or Strangulation	Undead's touch make the target unable to catch his or her breath unless a save is made.	Bruises around the neck; head moves more freely on the undead's shoulders, indicating a broken neck
Life Stealing	Once per day the undead may steal a level from a target. A saving throw applies, of course, and the level may only be recovered if the undead is destroyed and the body burned or otherwise annihilated.	The undead has a lifeless dead eyed look; speaks of being so hungry all the time, or feeling empty
Magic	Undead may cast the spell 3/day. No verbal, somatic, or material components required, as the magic is infused in their body. For spells over 4th level the number of times cast is reduced to 1/day for 5th and 6th level spells, 1/month for 7th level spells, 1/year for 8th level spells, and 1/century for 9th level spells. Certain spells like **Wish**, **Limited Wish**, or **Alter Reality** are not usable like this.	The undead looks like the victim of the spell.
Poison: Artificial	Undead has a poisonous bite or touch inflicting the same damage the poison that killed him or her.	Foul chemical odors emanate from the undead; it seeks out sources of the chemicals used to make the poison to replenish the supply of the poison in his or her metabolism.
Poison: Natural	Undead has a poisonous bite or touch inflicting the same damage the poison that killed him or her.	The undead looks sickly, green, or otherwise unhealthy; has features of the venomous creature, like multifaceted eyes for insect and bug poisons, a forked tongue, slitted eyes, or viper fangs for snake venom, etc.
Severed Limb	The limb may move around independently within sight of the body as the undead requires it, acting as if it were still attached.	Ugly wound or scar at the severing point; slight disconnect between the body and the limb as the limb hovers almost in place by the body; blows don't transmit force from the area hit to the other part

Some undead don't show their colors right off. The listless stare and the cry of "Brains!" (or for vegetarian ones, "Grains!") from a zombie hoard, the pale skin and bad breath coming out of jagged and rotting teeth of ghouls, and the lack of any fashion sense most skeletons have are clear indications, but others can be a bit more subtle. This leads to some interesting situations. Goody Edna might be bereft since her husband Jake died, so when she starts talking about her conversations with Jake each evening people might think she's losing her mind, not realize Jake is a ghost or vampire. This can delay the proper identification of the cause of local problems and provide some detective work before the characters figure out what's going on.

In game terms give any character a save against charm to shake off the influence of seeing a friend or family member trying to beguile them. See table 2 for modifiers to this roll. For this particular case elves have a 30% chance, not a 90% chance, to resist this charm attempt, as they are facing a completely different type of charming attempt than those done by magic. Half elves have no resistance to this kind of charm above their save.

Table 2: Modifiers to charm by the undead

Situation	Modifier
Saw the body of the undead burned or otherwise utterly destroyed	+3
Attended the funeral of the deceased or was present when the deceased was killed	+2
Was told conclusively by more than one person the deceased was dead and witnessed others disposing of the deceased's possessions; Didn't know the deceased	+1
Was told that the person died by trusted people; no close relationship with the deceased	0
Close friend of the deceased; heard a rumor or received written or secondhand data the person was deceased	-1
Very close friend or family member of the deceased; heard a rumor the deceased was dead	-2
Best friend of the deceased or very close family member; had no indication the deceased was no longer living	-3
Spouse of the deceased; target of charm is mentally unbalanced or otherwise out of contact with reality	-4

Use whatever modifiers apply to the situation, but the modification shouldn't go below -4 or above +3, so round off at those points. Charm is a one-time attempt – either it works or it doesn't.

What if You CAN Take it With You?

Remember too that any person not quite completely deceased might know all kinds of things others don't. Spirits are, according to some sources, a chatty bunch. (If they aren't then why would they answer every call a medium makes?) Spirits may know things no one else knows about the local area, like who is buried where, where the secret hiding places are, and where things of great power and usefulness to them lay undiscovered and what they're capable of. Also remember that a spirit or other undead might also know where gold pieces are hidden, and there are people who will do anything for enough gold no matter who is paying. It's possible for even lower powered undead to have a lot of influence with the local underworld. If they're a type that maintains memories they might have a few scores to settle too.

One more thing – some undead create their own followers. It's reasonable to suppose that these followers would tell their master or mistress all kinds of things they know, again expanding the undead's knowledge and power.

Conclusions

With these changes the undead become far more interesting and far less easy to destroy. Too often undead, especially the weaker types, quickly become self-propelled caltrops, something to slow a party down while the big nasties prepare for the party's arrival. The changes described above turn them into something far more dangerous, and with a lot more possible menace. Have fun working out these changes to your undead, and watch the look on your players' faces as a skeleton grabs a shield and says, "Milord, I hereby challenge you to single combat."

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Undead are Done to Death?

by Andrew Hamilton

I'm not just saying this because I can't stand all the glittery, emo vampires (necrophilia, makes my skin crawl) and current pop culture fascination with zombie apocalypses. I was sick of them before that, when there seemed to be a lich or three behind every plot, some liches were good, and there were all kinds of misunderstood undead, etc. (I had many 2E Forgotten Realms resources back in the day).

It's not that I don't use undead in my games. I do and I believe they have a place at all levels of play. Heck, I even *like* using undead in my games. Let's face it, undead make a great enemy -– there are no moral quandaries about putting down mindless zombies or corpse-chewing ghouls, or sending a wraith to its final rest. I just believe that there's a real danger in relying too much or *unthinkingly* on undead. They have built in weaknesses and killer powers. This was probably intended for balance, but in my experience it means that each encounter has a tendency to skew one way or the other.

Weaknesses

Standard by-the-book (BTB) undead have various weaknesses. If players know a particular weaknesses (*and old-time gamers know the weaknesses*), the undead fold like a cheap lawn chair when hostilities start. How scary can something be when running water, sunlight or garlic takes it out? How about anti-undead items like holy water or the **Mace of Disruption**?

Along the same line consider the cleric's ability to turn undead. One mid-level cleric with a hot d20 and "poof" – that cunningly crafted ghoul encounter just went down the crapper. Yes, the DM can increase the numbers of undead to render turning useless – I admit I do, and I suspect that's why the number of ghouls appearing is 2 to 24. That nerfs the cleric though, whom I believe deserves the chance to lay a holy smack down on undead after patching up the party repeatedly. There's always a danger that a hot roll can completely ruin an encounter by making what looked challenging a cakewalk. "You rolled a 20, and you have a luckstone? I guess the lich runs away screaming like a little girl.".

Conversely, a lousy roll puts the party in hand to hand combat with undead that drain levels, or more dangerously paralyze or age their victims. This is especially ugly if the DM designed the encounter with the assumption that some of the undead would be turned.

Without throwing in some "extra protection" like anti-turning magic or unholy places (as per the DMG), only by placing higher level undead (relative to the PCs) can the DM be certain that the undead will be able to stand and fight.

As a quick aside, the turning undead tables need to be revisited by someone with more patience and attention to detail than me. If the wight is a 6th level monster and the ghast is a 4th level (based on the DMG xp values), shouldn't the ghast come before the wight on the turning tables? And should a dretch really be harder to turn than a lich?

PC Killing Powers

Undead have formidable offensive powers. The number one baddy is level draining. There is no save. None. At all. What's worse, unless the campaign is awash in cash and the local cleric is 16th level and will cast **Restoration** when you cruise by the McChurch drive-thru and drop off a bag of gold, level draining is permanent. Let's face it, being dead is easier to fix in the game (**Raise Dead** is a level 5 spell, available at 9th level). I believe that level draining is bad karma to introduce into the game, especially at low levels, which means that the level drainers need to be placed very, very carefully. That also means that by the time level draining isn't "insta-kill" (like level 6 or 7) that wight encounter isn't a threat as a 6th level cleric will turn it 80% of the time.

I've also heard the complaint that "level draining" is meta-gaming, and that it is more harmful to low level PCs than high level (or vice versa, depending on whether one is

considering survivability or xp loss). I understand those complaints, and they have validity. Any way you slice it, level loss is a steep, steep price to pay, although it beats being dead.

Paralyzation (ghouls and ghasts), despite being a temporary effect, can be near insta-kill, particularly when the ghouls outnumber the party. If everyone is tied up in melee, one of two things happens when a victim is paralyzed. First, the ghouls who were scratching and biting at the paralyzed PC now divert their attention to someone who is still up and fighting, worsening the odds for those still on their feet. Second, a paralyzed victim is dead in the next round as the ghouls eviscerate him and then proceed to the first option in round 2.

Now, I can get on board with strength drain (shadows), as the party can still cut and run, despite suffering some consequences that will haunt them for a while. Mummy rot is pretty nasty too, as is ghost aging.

Unbalanced Outcomes

My experience has been that when the party has the right counter-ability they roll over the undead like a lawnmower through daffodils. When they lack that ability the tables are completely turned. I'm the first to admit one of the attractions of old school play is the fact that "game balance" is not the Holy Grail, and there are (and should be) encounters that players should avoid. Sometimes it's fun to mow through mooks, and sometimes it's fun to run like a little girl from a Big Bad. However (shades of *Tucker's Kobolds* here) with the right terrain and preparation those mooks should be able to reasonably challenge a higher level party. To do so with undead requires some meta-gaming on the part of the DM. Theoretically gnolls and zombies (both level II monsters) should be equally challenging, but that theory erodes at level 4 and up – possibly sooner, given the high chance of success a 2nd or 3rd level cleric has in turning the zombies.

To keep low level undead useful as mooks in high level play without having 100 skeletons swarm the party (because overbearing is always, always, always a threat no matter how high your level is), the TSR designers came up with a neat rule, described in *CM2, Death's Ride*. This rule (yes, it's BECMI, but it's an example of the struggle) allows more powerful, intelligent undead to command lesser undead, and the lesser undead are turned as if they were the commanding undead. Of course, introducing this rule at the 15th level of play leaves one wondering why it wasn't used at low levels, making those skeletons commanded by a ghast a lot tougher to turn?

Ecology

Being self-reproducing, intelligent undead should be everywhere, and nearly undefeatable. Forget zombie hordes, a few ghasts could easily wipe out a rural village, eat their fill and triple or quadruple their numbers, then head to the next village. A pack of level drainers will overcome most non-clerical opponents. While I find the thought of a dragon-wight conceptually interesting, a level draining breath weapon which has no saving throw smacks of being a tactic of one of "those DMs" [you know the type, the ones who revel in the Total Party Kill (TPK)].

My Point

Undead encounters should be carefully designed, taking into account the fact that undead encounters tend to be unpredictable, and most likely at one end of the encounter difficulty bell curve (e.g., a grind or a cake walk). Averages work when designing a combat that will last for numerous rounds, as the random outcomes in each individual round will "average out" over the course of the encounter. It doesn't work with undead encounters as there is only one shot at turning; no catching up "next round".

Decent DMs can address any or all of these problems by structuring encounters intelligently, and by understanding the consequences of their decisions. We all have our particular house rules, our playing style, and will find something that works for us. I find the nature of the undead foe a challenge. It doesn't help that I find the current climate of zombie/vampire fascination just a little annoying. But, don't get me started on werewolves, or drow ...

Level Draining Is Metagaming

by Bryan Fazekas

This is certainly an inflammatory title for an article. Next to alignment, level draining is possibly the most argued and divisive topic in Dungeons and Dragons. Many players express a horror of level draining that transcends character death – they'd rather have their character killed than level drained.

What is level draining? In Advanced Dungeons & Dragons (AD&D) level draining is an attack form used by some undead, plus an effect connected to a few magic items and one spell. The effect upon a player character (PC) is to remove one or more levels of experience, including loss of hit points and skills gained at those level(s), plus the loss of the experience points (xp) used to attain those level(s). According to the *AD&D Dungeon Masters Guide* (DMG) on page 119, a PC's xp total is reduced to the mid-point of the next lower level.

The problem is with the last part – experience points. For illustration, we have a pair of 2nd level fighters, one has 4,001 xp and the other has 7,801 xp. Each faces a wight. If both are drained of one level each now has 3,001 xp. Fighter #1 lost 1,000 xp while #2 lost 4,801 xp. For further illustration fighter #3 is 10th level with 740,001 xp – having one level drained reduces her to 375,001 xp, a total loss of 365,000 xp!

Let's contrast that. Instead of a wight, the foe is a fighter armed with a long sword. A successful hit on any of the above fighters inflicts 1-8 points of damage regardless of their level or amount of xp.

Hence the contention that level draining is a form of metagaming, which is using out of game knowledge to dramatically affect the game.

Replacing Level Draining

Whether players like level draining or not, level draining undead scare the bejeebers out of everyone. Any replacement mechanism must inspire a similar sense of dread. Hence Mind and Body Draining, which is just as nasty, maybe more so:

Some undead – notably wights, wraiths, spectres, and vampires – have the ability to drain the mind and/or body when striking a victim. These horrible undead are difficult for even the bravest to approach, and being within touching distance invites long lasting harm.

Draining undead possess a fear aura – all non-supernatural creatures coming within 30' of such an undead must save vs. Wand or flee as per the **Fear** spell, e.g., flee for one round per hit die of the undead. Note that characters making their saving throw will have to save again if that same undead is met during a separate encounter, and characters failing their saving throw must save again when coming within 30' of that undead.

The physical attack of these monsters is vampiric in nature, e.g., the number of points inflicted is added to the monster's hit point total, up to a maximum of double the monster's normal maximum. Hit points above the normal maximum begin draining away after 6 turns at a rate of one hp/round.

Far worse, however, is the chilling touch of these monsters which drains the mind and/or body of the victim in addition to inflicting bodily damage. Draining undead leech 1d3 points of strength, intelligence, wisdom, dexterity, constitution, or charisma from their victims on a successful hit! There is equal chance for which attribute a given undead drains – roll 1d6 to determine which. A group of similar undead, e.g., wights, may all drain different attributes.

Some rare draining undead will drain multiple attributes with a single strike. Roll on the Attributes Drained Table on the next page to determine how many attributes are affected.

If the undead drains more than one attribute, roll randomly for which attributes are affected (as above). Note that it is possible for a draining

undead to drain an attribute doubly or triply. Roll 2d3 or 3d3 for points drained in this case. The most potent draining undead, spectres and vampires, always drain two attributes and may possibly drain three, four, or even six! [Roll twice on the table.]

Attributes Drained Table

d100	# Attributes Affected
01-90	any one attribute affected
91-99	any two attributes affected
00	any three attributes affected

The attribute drains are permanent unless the draining undead is slain by the following dawn. Should that happy event occur the victim may make a saving throw vs. Death Magic for each point lost, with success indicating that a week of bed rest will restore the point. Alternately, a **Lesser Restoration**, **Restoration**, **Alter Reality**, **Limited Wish**, or **Wish** will restore the lost attributes, although all but **Alter Reality** and **Wish** will require one week of bed rest for each point regained. **Restoration**, **Alter Reality**, and **Wish** will restore the lost attributes even if the undead is not slain within the time limit; **Lesser Restoration** and **Limited Wish** will not.

The worst effect, however, is the *Curse of the Damned*. Each hit on a victim inflicts a cumulative -1 penalty per die on all "to hit", damage, saving throw, and other rolls, although all die rolls will be a minimum of 1 per die. Also, any spells or spell-like effects cast by the victim are cast as if the victim were that many levels lower with respect to range, area of effect, and damage. For example a 5th level magic user struck twice by a wraith would have a -2 on all die rolls and cast spells as if 3rd level. This does not prevent spells from being cast, e.g., this character can still cast a **Fireball**, but the effects are determined as if the character were 3rd level and each die of damage is at -2 with a minimum of one point per die. Note that the more powerful draining undead (spectres and vampires) inflict a cumulative -2 penalty. Each application of **Remove Curse**, cast at a level equal to or higher than the hit dice of the attacking undead, will remove a "-1" of the curse, e.g., the above magic user will require two applications of **Remove Curse**.

Note that the effects occur only with the monster's natural attacks. Should the undead use a weapon there is no draining or curse inflicted, nor do effect occur simply by touching the undead.

If the character dies while suffering the *Curse of the Damned*, she will rise again in three days as the type of undead that afflicted her. Should the character be unlucky enough to be cursed by more than one type of draining undead, roll randomly for which she will rise as. **Note:** If the character is raised from the dead before rising as undead the transformation will still take place. **Remove Curse** cast upon a dead or newly raised character will prevent her from rising, although it must be cast at a level twice the hit dice of the attacking undead to prevent the transformation.

What is Metagaming?

Taken from Wikipedia:

Metagaming is a broad term usually used to define any strategy, action or method used in a game which transcends a prescribed ruleset, uses external factors to affect the game, or goes beyond the supposed limits or environment set by the game. Another definition refers to the game universe outside of the game itself.

In simple terms, it is the use of out-of-game information or resources to affect one's in-game decisions.

In role-playing games, a player is metagaming when they use knowledge that is not available to their character in order to change the way they play their character (usually to give them an advantage within the game), such as knowledge of the mathematical nature of character statistics, or the statistics of a creature that the player is familiar with but the character has never encountered. In general, it refers to any gaps between player knowledge and character knowledge which the player acts upon.

Fixing Level Draining

Many DMs like level draining but think it's too hard to fix – one of the problems of level draining is that a cleric of 16th level must be available to cast **Restoration**. In contrast a dead character only needs a cleric of 9th level to cast **Raise Dead**. The following spell offers a correction for this oddity, a lower level version of **Restoration**.

Lesser Restoration

Necromantic
Level: Cleric 5
Components: V, S, M
Range: touch
Casting time: 2 rounds
Duration: Perm
Saving Throw: none
Area of Effect: 1 Person

This is a lesser form of **Restoration** which has a time limit: it must be cast on the recipient within 1 hour per level of the caster, from the time of the victim's LAST energy drain. As part of the material components, the recipient must sacrifice a gem worth at least 5,000 GP gem to the god(ess) granting the spell.

After the preparations are made, which requires a prayer by both the caster and recipient, the recipient makes a saving throw vs. Spells. If the save is successful the most recent level draining is now only temporary, and the lost level(s) will return after 24 hours. If failed, then the level(s) can only be restored with the 7th level Restoration spell, or gaining more experience.

If the drain was a single level, the save versus death is at -1. Each casting of the spell allows the regaining of one draining from most recent, to first gained. If being used on a dual drain, the above spell can be used, but the victim makes the save at a -4 penalty.

Example: Jurgen the paladin was drained four times from 11th level down to 5th level, by two wraiths (2 levels each) and two wights (1 level each). The 2 wights were last in the combat to hit him. Phillius the cleric accepts the sacrifice of a valuable gem for his god and casts **Lesser Restoration** within 10 hours of the last draining. Jurgen's first save is a 19, and so will gain that level back (from 5th to 6th) after 24 hrs. The second save (for 6th to 7th) unfortunately is a 3 and fails. The third and fourth are both natural 20's (now why could he not have had those in combat!), and will regain those four levels. At the end of the day he is back to 10th level, but has to wait until Sir Hecktric the High Priest shows up, for a chance at the regular **Restoration**.

NOTE: The level draining for the above spell, refers only to levels lost to undead or other creatures who remove life levels, NOT to age, ability stat reductions, nor to spells/magic items that remove levels.

Source: David Stairs

Co-Joined Coins

by Bryan Fazekas

This matched pair of ancient looking copper pieces radiate faint magic when detected for. If one coin is held and the bearer concentrates, they will know in which direction the matching coin is located. An intensity of feeling will indicate distance. This functions as long as both coins are on the same plane, and neither is in an anti-magic area or container.

The original coins were produced by a wizard whose **Chalice of Potions** was stolen and later recovered. A **Co-Joined Coin** was affixed to the bottom of the chalice so that it could be easily located. For centuries the chalice was believed protected by strong magics as those who managed to steal it died quickly and messily.

Undead Unlimited!

by Bryan Fazekas

Most adults have seen at least one of the plethora of zombie movies that have spawned like blowflies on a corpse since *Night of the Living Dead* premiered in 1968. In most of the movies the undead multiply as the people who are wounded – or killed but not eaten – all rise as zombies. They multiply without bounds, threatening to overrun the world, and wiping out all uninfected humans. One version of The Apocalypse.

Now consider undead in AD&D. Undead such as skeletons and zombies don't multiply, they have to be created. Liches and mummies are also constructed, so they don't multiply either. But ghouls, ghasts, and level draining undead reproduce by killing or draining mortals. The following excerpts are from the *AD&D Monster Manual*:

- *Ghoul*, page 43: Any human killed by a ghoulish attack will become a ghoul unless blessed (or blessed and then resurrected).
- *Spectre*, page 89: Any human totally drained of life energy by a spectre becomes a half-strength spectre under the control of the spectre which drained him.
- *Vampire*, page 99: Any human or humanoid drained of all life energy by a vampire becomes an appropriately strengthened vampire under control of its slayer.
- *Wight*, page 100: Any human totally drained of life energy by a wight will become a half-strength wight under control of its slayer.

What stops these undead from proliferating like the heavies in a George Romero movie, eventually obliterating the campaign world? Practically speaking, nothing. The average zero level human, or one HD dwarf or elf, has little chance in dealing with the least of these monsters and absolutely no chance of survival against the most powerful.

If a vampire kills one person per week, that adds up to 52 people at the end of a year, 5,200 at the end of a century. If each kills rises as a vampire? *Vampire Apocalypse*. Now add in the spectres, wights, and the like. The living don't have a chance.

Why Does Anyone Care?

Is this a real problem? The Dungeon Master (DM) can hand wave (e.g., ignore it) and the problem doesn't even exist. So why worry about it if it's a non-issue?

Some people want realism in their game, they want things to make sense. For those that don't care about realism and things making logical sense? This ruling on how undead spawn is a gold mine of ideas for the DM to use. Following are ideas for limiting the spawning of level draining and carnivorous undead, and how the DM can use the rules to manufacture interesting role playing scenarios.

Level Draining Undead

Spectre and wight victims become a half strength undead of the appropriate type under the control of their killer. Vampire victims become an appropriately strengthened

vampire under the control of their killer. [Note: the vampire reference indicates that the victim retains their original class, augmented by vampire powers, but this isn't explained.]

One way to limit undead proliferation is to limit the number of undead which can be created. One choice is to set the limit equal to each monster's hit dice, which means a vampire can create and control eight thralls, a spectre can control seven, and a wight can control four. If that's too much for the campaign, cut the numbers in half to 4, 3, and 2 for vampires, spectres, and wights (respectively).

What is the rationale for this limit? Undead have a connection to the Negative Material Plane (NMP). The connection is through the master and there is a limit to the amount of energy that can be channeled to the thralls.

Ghouls and Ghasts

While the description of ghasts does not indicate they reproduce as do ghouls, the author treats ghasts as "super" ghouls and uses the same rules for both.

What is the limiting factor for ghouls?

While hit dice could be easily used the same way as described for level draining undead, it doesn't "feel" like a good fit. Some other mechanism should be used.

Time can be used as a limiting factor. What if ghouls have a limited un-life span? They last for a finite period of time, a week, a month, a year? At the end they collapse and molder. Alternately that time limit could start from their last meal of humans, especially if the time span is short, say one week.

Ghouls could completely destroy the humans in an area, run out of food, and all molder. Or the DM can choose that when ghouls make a kill they immediately begin feasting, which will strictly limit the number of kills made.

Role Playing Ideas

Wights are of average intelligence and lawful evil. They are smart enough to understand how

Old School Undead

Tim Kask – TSR employee #1, editor of the The Dragon magazine, and editor/author for several OD&D supplements and AD&D – has a Q&A thread on the Dragonsfoot forums where he answers a lot of inane questions, including mine. http://www.dragonsfoot.org/forums/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=23223) I posed the following question which he kindly answered.

BF: I'd like you to make another trip in the Wayback Machine! In reading the descriptions of level draining undead, the MM descriptions typically indicate that victims become half strength monsters under the control of their killer. I always assumed this to mean that they were half hit dice, e.g., a wight's victim became a 2HD wight. Is this what was intended, or am I interpreting it incorrectly?

TK: As I recall, and the memories from back then are very dusty, we (contemporary DM's) made them half their original HP, or a 2HD wight, whichever was greater. It was more about turning on their former fellows than any other consideration. As an example, from my old campaign: a ftr-type with 35 HP gets totally drained; he becomes an 18HP, 2HD monster (an oxymoron of sorts). HD were used on one combat table and had to do with ST back then. In the example above, if the afflicted survives, (the players flee or drive it off), then the next time encountered, if there is a next time, the former PC-turned-wight is now a 4HD wight with max HP. But that is just the way I handled it.

I also ruled that a fresh wight could not immediately know how to drain a full level per touch; during the melee in which they were "created" they can only drain half a level per touch. If, as happened above, it survives to encounter another day, it has full powers.

Very early on, I seem to recall that an entire low-level party was "wighted"; the original drained a 2nd lvl, which then drained a 1st lvl, and so on until the entire party were wights. What fun!

Last year Tim – along with Frank Mentzer, James Ward, and Chris Clark – formed Eldritch Enterprises, a new company to make products for old School games. Their web site is http://eldritchent.com/

to cooperate … and intelligent enough to resent and envy their master.

Scenario #1:

A wight has plagued a town, killing all caught outside after dark. The party arrives to deal with the problem, and finds easy clues to track the wight back to its lair, where they dispatch it. Unknown to the party, the thralls of the master wight have been making indiscriminate kills and leaving trails back to the master's lair. The first night after the party destroys the master, the former thralls go on a killing spree, each producing 4 thralls of its own. The number of wights goes from 5 to 20 in one night!

Scenario #2:

Rooting around in an old tomb while looking for valuables, a young adventurer-wannabe was "infected" by the moldering remains of an ancient ghoul. It appeared that a cut got infected and the infection rapidly spread and killed him within a day. Three nights later he rose as a ghoul, broke into the home of his closest friend, and slaughtered him and his family. The ghoul devoured the father but left the bodies of the friend, friend's mother, and two younger siblings. Three nights later they all arose and raided a friend's home, slaughtering and devouring all within. The ghouls kill everyone they find, each devour a person, and any others rise three nights later. Within a few weeks the terrified survivors of a once thriving town are badly outnumbered by ravenous ghouls. The party wanders into town and find themselves badly outnumbered.

Campaign Choices

In the author's campaign, when any player character killed by an undead (of any type) the chance of that character rising as undead is 100% unless measures are taken. Do the players know this? Of course not!

For new players this will cause consternation and horror. More experienced players should expect something bad to happen and take appropriate measures to avoid problems.

A parting thought – why would anyone in a D&D world use any treatment for their dead that did not include burning or some other method to ensure the dead will not rise?

Not Enough Undead?

What if it's not enough? What if the DM needs *more* undead of a given type?

The classic method is the strongest undead rules the others. Numerous types of undead could be welded together by a strong vampire, mummy, or lich. Or the DM could use multiple levels of thralls of a single undead type.

One choice is for each thrall have its own thralls, say each can create half as many as its master, e.g., a vampire thrall can create four sub-thralls. Or the DM can produce something like a family tree, where each thrall can have half the number of thralls its master has. Thus a master vampire can have 8 thralls which we can refer to as "children". Each "child" can have 4 "grandchildren", each "grandchild" can have of 2 "great grandchildren", and each "great grandchild" can have 1 "great great grandchild". Any people killed beyond these numbers are simply dead.

That's a lot of vampires!

Another choice is that when a master vampire is killed its thralls all become master vampires, and each sub-thrall level is bumped up. The party kills the master vampire only to discover they just made things worse, now they have 8 master vampires to deal with. And people previously killed may now rise as vampires now that there are openings in the ranks.

Another thought is that a group of vampires may not all have the same master. Killing one vampire may have no effect upon the others. Ideas are limitless, bounded only by a DM's inventiveness.

Too complicated? Stick with the original idea of one level of thralls …

Author's Note: This article was spawned by a discussion in the August 2010 thread "alternative 1e undead (no energy drain)" started by GengisDon *on the Dragonsfoot forums.*

The House of Ponce, Bank and Moneylender

by Nicole Massey

Editor's Note: We received a number of requests for bank maps. The inside front cover provides a bank map and this article provides optional stocking for the map.

Owner: Leon De Ponce is a rotund man, quite the opposite of his brother Bejold, who runs this institution of Phaten. The Ponce family has provided banking and moneylending to the residents of Phaten for well over two millennia. Leon takes his banking responsibilities seriously, and has excellent relations with the banking houses of Hofstra and Rand in Haven, Livre in Phaten, Yen Ten in Montberg, and even Suntreader and Watermark in Atlantis. (he's fond of saying that "Money knows no borders and has no politics.") Leon is brown haired and eyed, and when not in his banking house he spends his time doting on his wife and ten children.

Hours Of Operation: 10 am to 3 pm

Exterior Description: This two story building is made of huge stone blocks engraved with the coat of arms of house ponce. (eight coins in a circle on a typical heater shield – these stone cuttings have no color to them) Windows are long and narrow and are made up of square panes with no roundels, but they are obviously very thick. The panes are set in metal crossbars and iron bars further cover the windows. The door is a single door, painted burgundy, under an awning, also painted red. The awning also sports a sign that says "Ponce" and has the coat of arms, this time with the background red and the coins gold. The second story looks the same as the first, but without the door. The roof is of ceramic tiles. There are two chimneys, both capped. Looking through the windows gives a slightly distorted view, as if something doesn't exactly track right but the viewer can't place what isn't quite right about the view. (Most folks get used to it very quickly and think nothing of it)

Interior Description: Upon entering the building the first thing that the visitor realizes is that the interior space is much smaller than the outside. The reason for this becomes apparent when one looks at the windows – the walls are two feet thick. Another interesting sensation is the feeling of entering the bank. The bank interior is always an even temperature, and there's a slight feeling of disorientation upon crossing the threshold into the space. This passes quickly and most patrons (and all employees) get used to it. Some people report strange visions as they enter the bank, though, of things like ephemeral spirits, traveling vast distances, or like they were whisked through several places almost instantly to get to where they currently are.

A third of the first floor is taken up with a massive safe, kept closed at all times. Careful inspection of the entrance will also reveal three sets of portcullis and matching grooves in the floor. The interior space is open to the ceiling for the center third of the building. On the western half is the vault, and on top of it sits Leon's desk in his personal office. The front of the vault is behind a long row of teller windows, with a long wooden bar and barred windows in front of each teller. This runs the entire length of the front of the vault and turns at the end where additional tellers stand up to the staircase. There is a passageway underneath the staircase to access the similar windows on the other side of the staircase where the money changers are stationed, which runs to the counter for the assayer's section where coins and raw precious metals are weighed and tested for purity and value. On the opposite end of the second floor is another loft space with safe deposit boxes. A vault door protects these when the bank isn't open. At the end of that loft sits an archer. A walkway runs along the back of the bank, and four more archers are stationed on it at regular intervals. There is also an archer outside Leon's office door. The rest of the first floor consists of desks for the

tellers and bank officers. Potted plants are all over the place, (Leon's wife Hyacinth likes plants) and fully a dozen armed guards sit in chairs and in protective boxes scattered around the room. There is a chimney at either end of the main floor with a hearth. Inspection of this hearth reveals that the flue is lined with spikes glistening with some sort of sticky substance that doesn't look like soot.

Price Range: HIGH! Money change rates are tough, while interest is not that high. Loans are also high interest.

Quality Range: EXCELLENT. If you bank here your money is as safe as it can reasonably be, while loans from here are done with compassion.

Outstanding Items (if any): Nothing is obvious, but there are magical protections on the vault doors and the windows are made of **glassteel**. Light is exclusively from light globes, and the chimneys are for heating and atmosphere during the winter. Spikes in the chimney are poisoned, save vs. poison at -2 or die in agony in 2 rounds. The magical protections are provided by the Wizard's Guild, who bank here and want their property and funds kept safe.

Cash Box: The vault and Safety deposit boxes aren't enough?

Occupants: Though banks don't have occupants, the guard is maintained around the clock. Guards are checked out thoroughly and it takes years to get a guard job here, including a full scan by a member of the psionics guild.

Staff: There are ten tellers, four loan officers, and four money counters, along with an assay clerk and two moneychangers. All of them are long term employees who went through years of scrutiny (and psionic scan) to get their jobs. Leon also has a secretary, the son of his head teller, and his two sons Arneau and Jarl work learning how the bank operates.

Customers: 2d6 customers will be transacting business during normal hours, with 8d4 customers in the first and last hour of business.

Loiterers: d4 loiterers have just arrived to be shoo'd off as soon as a guard notices him or her.

NPC Encounters: Anyone who has money to deposit or the need of a loan might be here.

Special Options: (if any): The bank building in Seakeep is a shell, heavily magicked, that serves as a front for the bank's actual building, which is located on a pocket plane created especially for the bank through powerful magics. Anyone who drills through the walls will find themselves in an empty unfinished building the same size as the bank but with nothing inside. This is the reason for the perfect temperature inside, slightly odd view through the windows, (permanent scrying portals) and the strange effects upon entering the building. This is never discussed. But the only ways into this bank are through the front door or by finding the pocket plane and drilling through the walls there, which is difficult as the plane is sized to fit the bank exactly. Creative players may find a way to break in, and this can provide a thrilling adventure, but it's not going to be easy. They have to get in through the doors, stop all the guards, then get through the vault door, where they'll find unseen servants of a special type that can and do cause damage to physical beings, along with a wide selection of nasty traps. This goes the same for the safety deposit boxes. So any party that manages to sack this bank will be able to boast about it for a very long time while they're fleeing from the hunters, both mundane and magical, that are after them.

Amulet of Borrowed Years

by Andrew Hamilton

This magical item was developed as a defense against magical aging. The amulet has a "life" of 101 years, and when its wearer would be subject to magical aging, the amulet will age instead of the wearer. This magical aging includes attacks by entities such as ghosts, or the effects of magical spells or effects including haste, potions of speed, or wish. As the amulet ages, rather than the wearer, the wearer is not subject to any system shock rolls that would normally be associated with magical aging. The amulet cannot be recharged, and when it has “aged” 101 years, it crumbles into dust.

2,000 xp value, 15,000 gp value

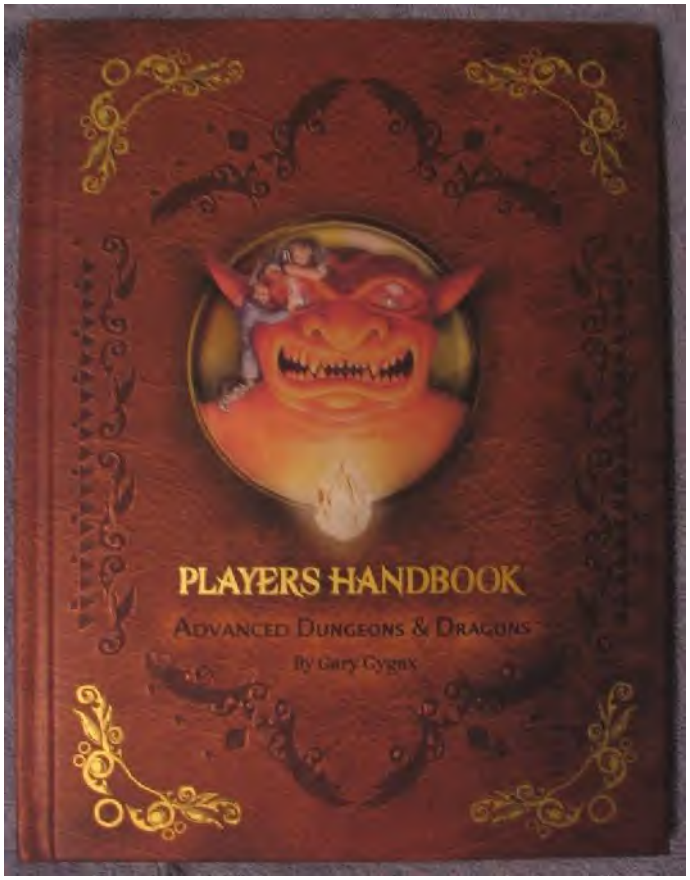
Review: The AD&D Core Books Reprint

by Andrew Hamilton

Editor's Note: Early this year Wizards of the Coast announced they were reprinting the ***Advanced Dungeons and Dragons*** *core books: the Dungeon Masters Guide, the Players Handbook, and the Monster Manual. A limited run, available only in the USA through local gaming stores would be released in April 2012.*

As April approached Wizards announced the release would be delayed until July. It also turned out the books were not released through game stores – they would be sold through other venues and outside of the USA.

The reasons for these changes are debated around the world and are not addressed here.



Reviewer's Note – I am not a book or binding expert, so my review is that of a layman. I'm also not reviewing the content, since the guts of these books have been analyzed in excruciating detail by hundreds of aficionados.

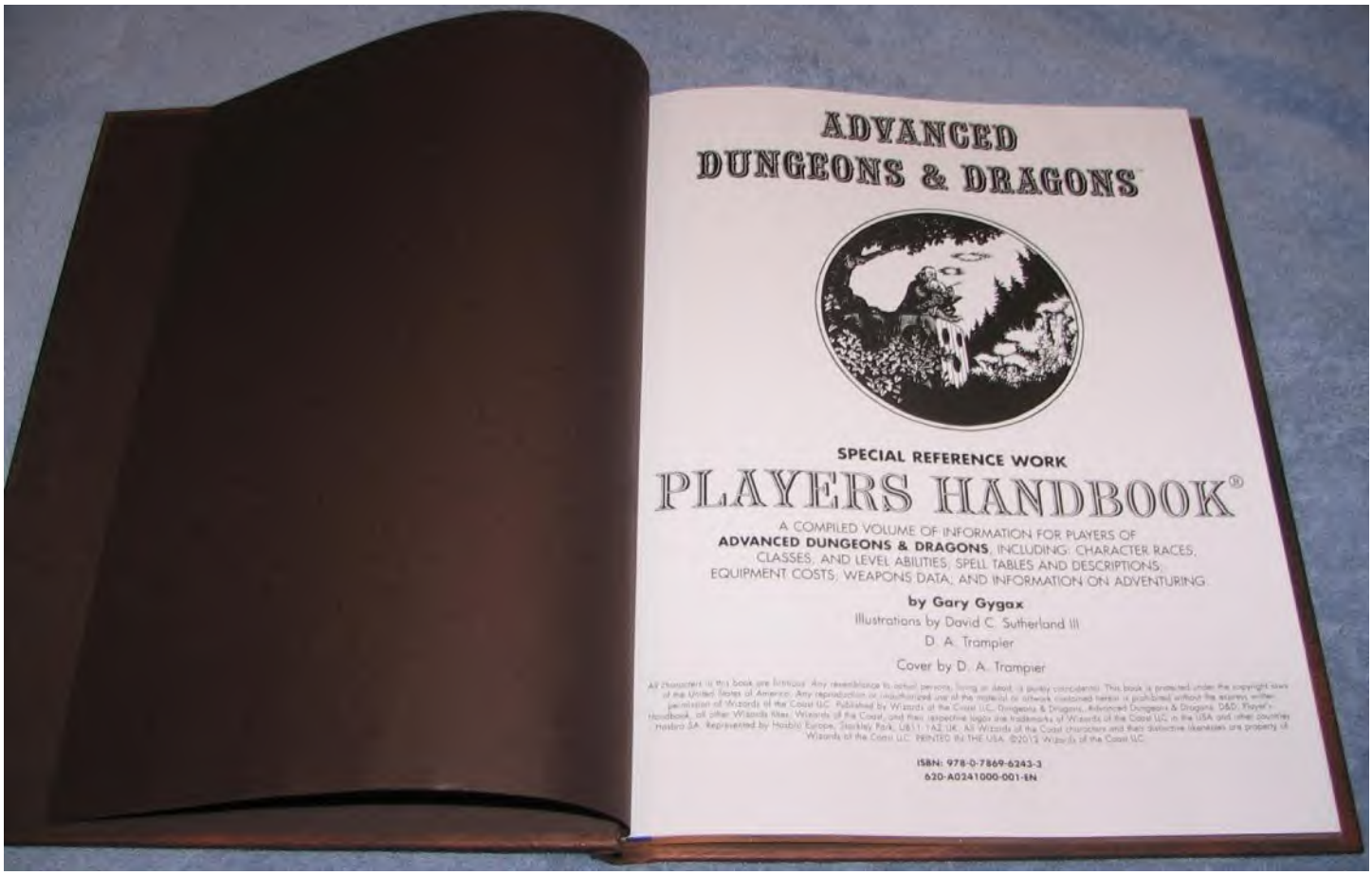
It's just after lunch on Sunday, July 15, 2012 and I have all three books in my possession. I got the call on Friday, but life prevented me from picking them up sooner (apparently my local game store was part of an early release program). To date, I've only taken the *Monster Manual* and *Players Handbook* out of the shrink wrap, but I am impressed.

The *Monster Manual* is the 4th Edition, from August 1979. I can't tell what edition the *Players Handbook* is. There are no blurbs about it being a reprint, except the title page where *Wizards of the Coast* claims 2012 copyright, has current addresses, etc.

The covers of both books feel solid, as do the spines. While there is some texture on the cover (to match the leather bound design) which I am not partial to, it looks and feels well made.

The dragon on the cover of the *Monster Manual* is instantly recognizable. It's the dragon from the cover of the 4th printing of the original. Looking at them side-by-side, it's a faithful reproduction with slightly different coloration, a very pleasing nod to the original.

A quick check of the other covers, and yes, the new cover art pulls an iconic item from the original cover. Definitely a nice touch!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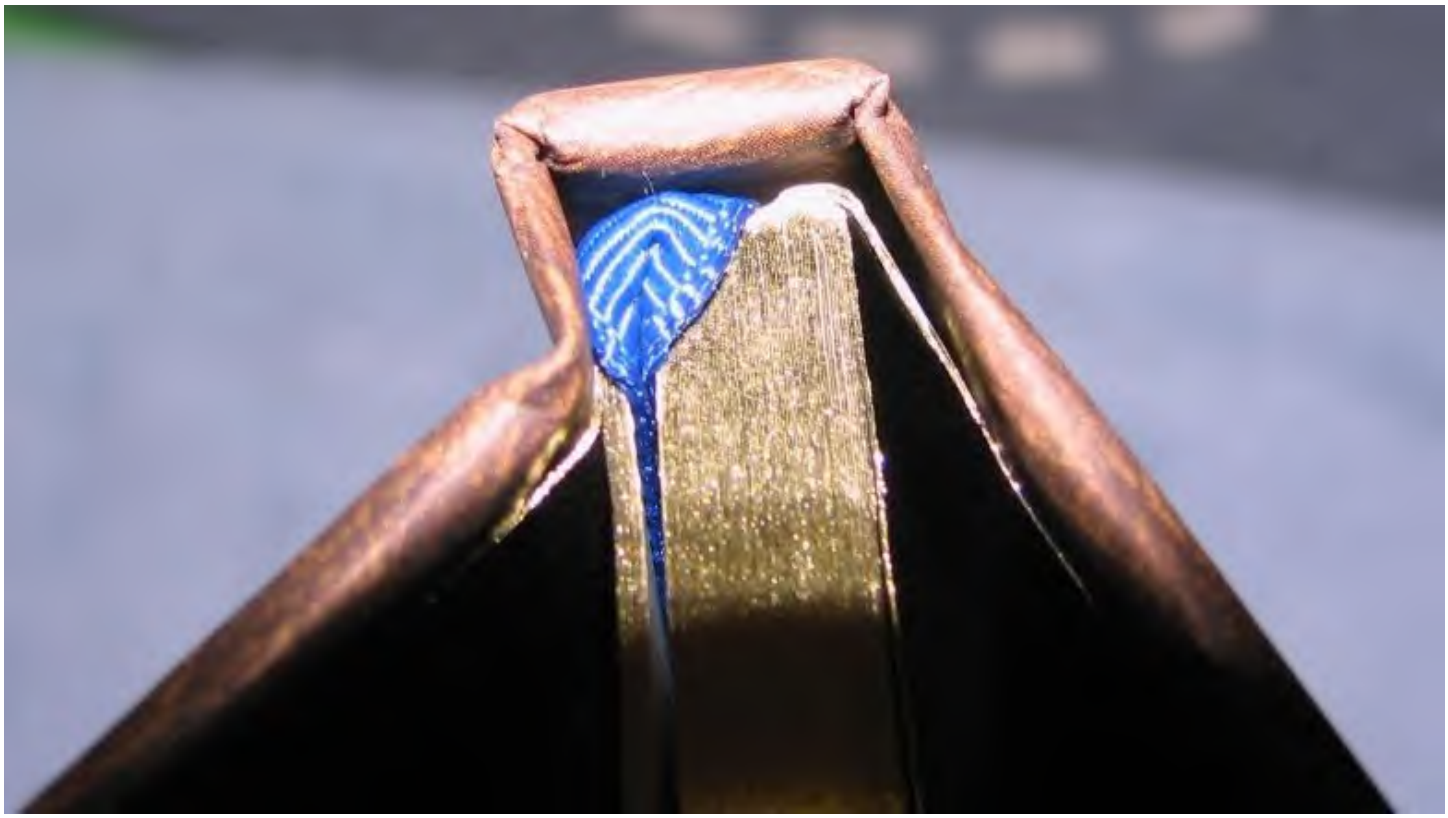


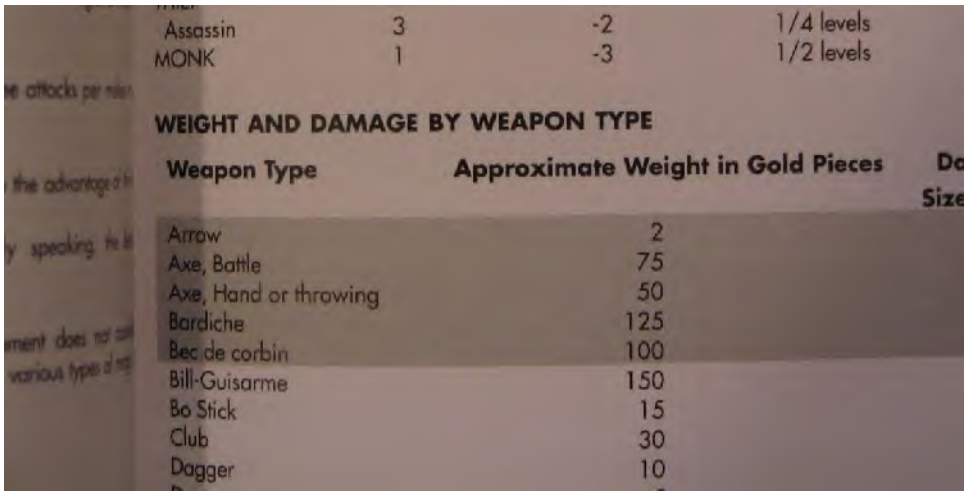
Opening it, the front and end pieces are very well glued, no crinkles or wrinkles, glue to the edge but not beyond. The spine didn't crack or split when I opened the book up wide.

The pages are heavier paper than I expected, although smooth and glossy, not the rougher texture of the old books. So, the feel of the page differs from my old *Monster Manual* and *Players Handbook* .

The text is very clear, better than my old books. The font is crisper. I don't know if it has to do with the age of my original books, the font selection, the paper or a combination of these. Anyway, the end result is that the books are easy to read.

I have not done a page by page comparison. The art seems to be all original, and looking at it, it looks to be about the same visual quality. So art-wise, there is nothing new to complain about.

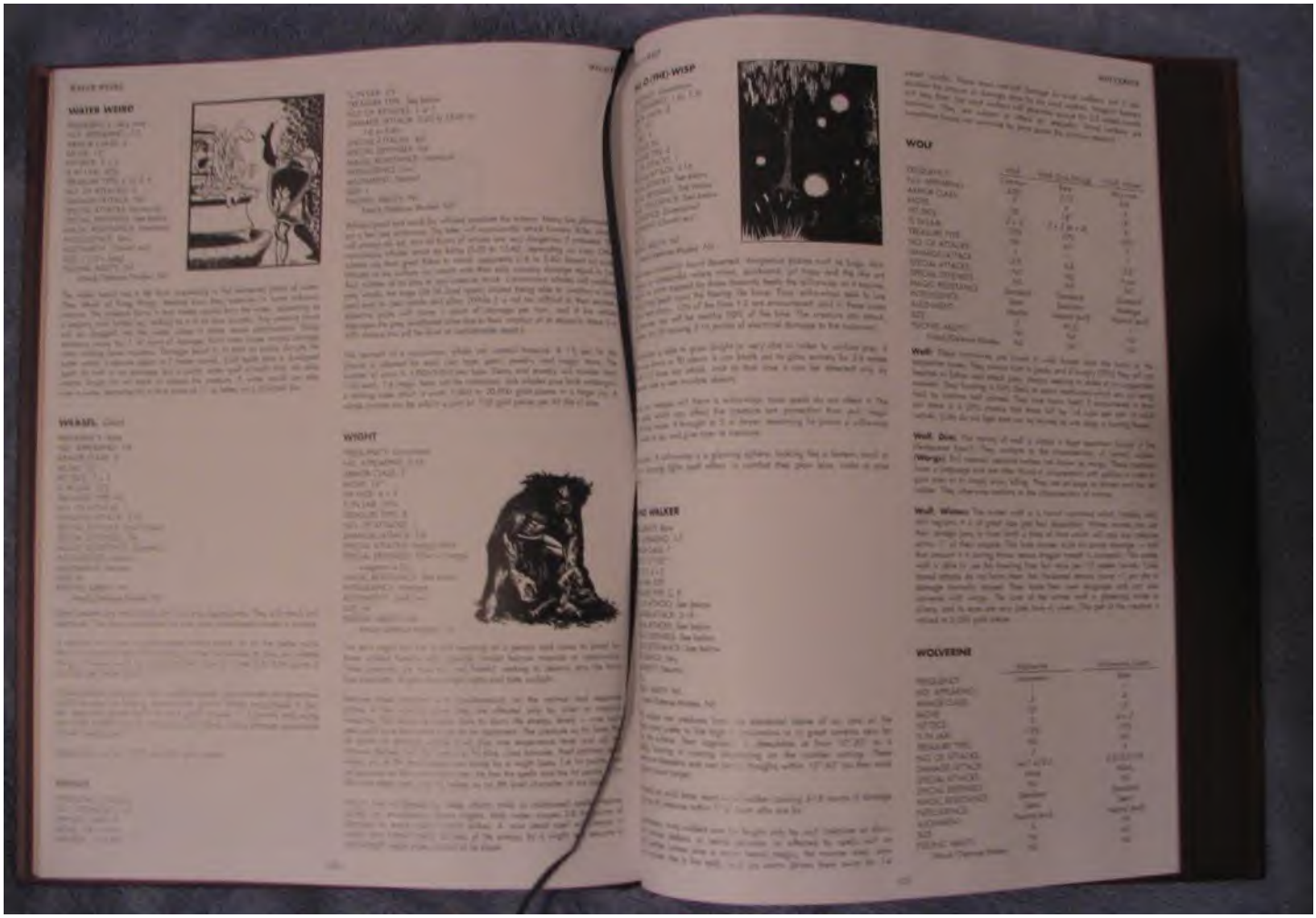
The edges of the pages have a gold finish, so when the book is closed you see gold. (Is that called edging?) There is a black ribbon bookmark for the *Monster Manual*, blue for the *Players Handbook,* and red for the *Dungeon Masters Guide*. It's a really nice touch, and useful too. The ribbon in the *Monster Manual* is currently marking the "Water Weird" entry on page 100.



Assassin	3	-2	1/4 levels
MONK	1	-3	1/2 levels

WEIGHT AND DAMAGE BY WEAPON TYPE

Weapon Type	Approximate Weight in Gold Pieces	Do Size
Arrow	2	
Axe, Battle	75	
Axe, Hand or throwing	50	
Bardiche	125	
Bec de corbin	100	
Bill-Guisarme	150	
Bo Stick	15	
Club	30	
Dagger	10	



The only new page, as far as I can tell, is at the tail end of the hard-cover (page 111 in the *Monster Manual*). This is a full page "ad" for the Gygax Memorial. Fairly modestly and tastefully (in my humble opinion) stated is *Wizards of the Coast* explaining this reprint was to "honor his work and memory". They keep their logo very small, which I thought was pretty classy.

In the spirit of disclosure, I dropped $123 Canadian for all three books, including 5% sales tax. I expect there was a slight mark up over the manufacturer's suggested retail price, but I don't mind supporting small businesses, and my FLGS has a decent out of print stock (lots of games).

Anyway, I believe that I got my money's worth , and bought a long term investment that will give me years of enjoyment (on the same day I spent more at the dive shop on breathing gas, which will last for about 240 minutes of bottom and deco time, so this is obviously relative). I'll carefully bag up and secure some of my original books (the ones that are in the best shape), and have these new editions to support my playing sets.

I'll leave someone else to speculate on what this means for the OSR. All I know is that I'm going to enjoy these new books.

A portion of the proceeds from the sales of these books is being donated by Wizards of the Coast to the Gygax Memorial Fund. The purpose of this organization is to raise funds to create a memorial bust of Gary Gygax in Donian Park in Lake Geneva Wisconsin.

http://www.gygaxmemorialfund.org/

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The Valley of Eternal Rest

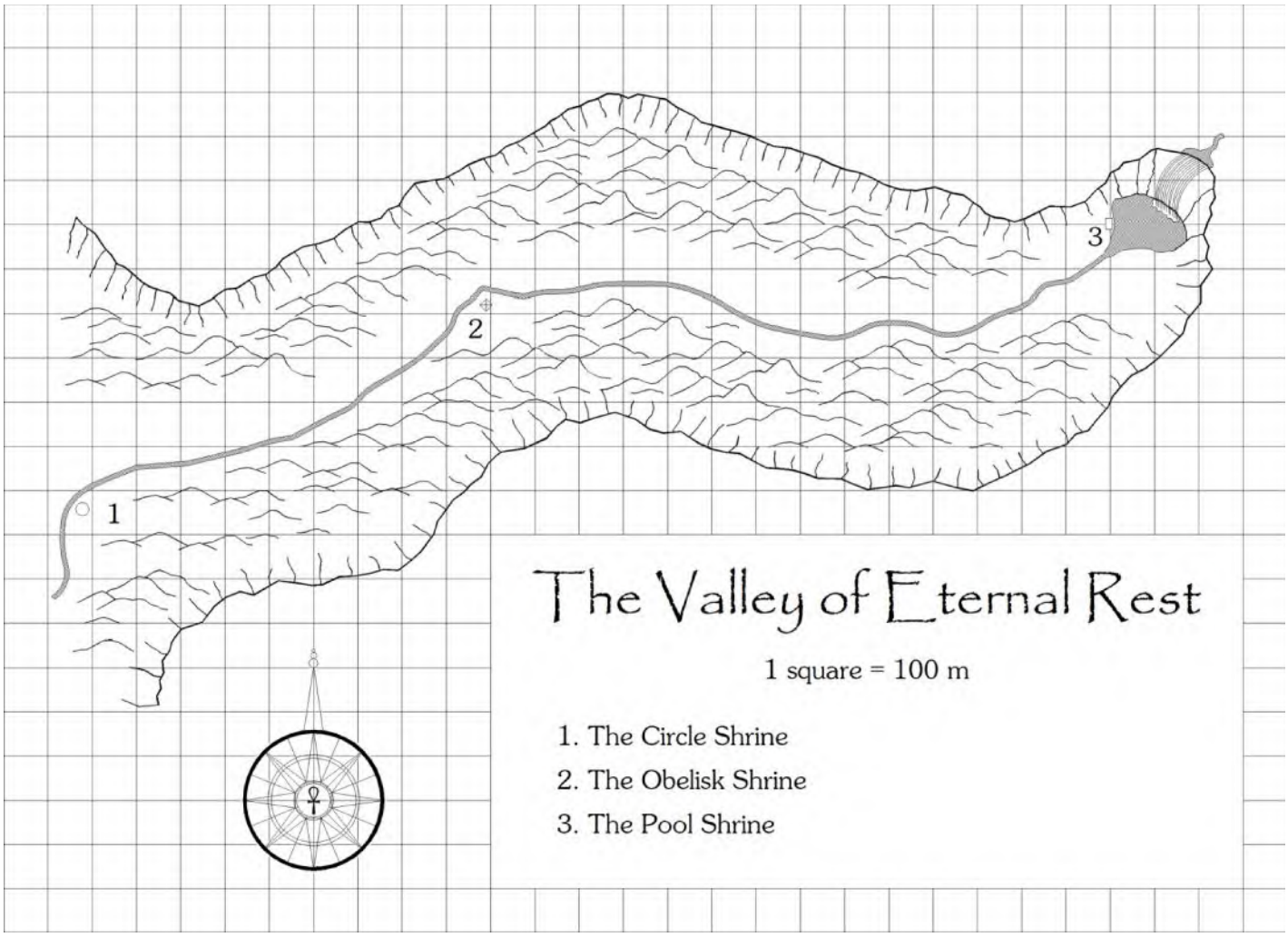
concept by Andrew Hamilton, edited by Bryan Fazekas

Preamble

This is **&** Magazine's first effort to develop and publish a co-operative adventuring location, and to make the magazine our readers' magazine. We thank all our readers and contributors, and hope that you find the result interesting, entertaining and useful. As always, your feedback (and continued contribution) is important to us so please let us know what you think.

This generic adventure location is designed to be easily inserted into any campaign, and consists of a number of small tomb complexes located within a valley that has been used as a burial ground for several cultures over several centuries. The location is designed for use with the 1st edition rules, and is intended to challenge a party of 6 or so PCs of levels 4 to 7.

This adventure is designed to be flexible enough to place into an ongoing campaign as a sandbox element, a destination for a quest (as the party seeks a McGuffin or gold), or to break individual tombs out to seed them across their own campaign world. Because the Valley of Eternal Rest has been used by many cultures and races over a long period of time, there is no single architecture, style, or content.



Physical Geography

This narrow valley is located in a foothills region, and has been carved into soft rock (sandstone) by a river (the River of Souls) and storm run-off from the plateau above. The tombs have been dug into the cliff faces for centuries, by more than one culture. The valley is approximately 1.5 miles long, and is about ½ mile wide. There are a few hoodoos, which break up the valley floor. The river descends in falls, with a large pool (a shrine and brier are beside this) then flows out of the valley. The river is about 6' at its deepest, 30' at its widest, averaging 4' deep and 20' wide. It has a rocky bottom, and flow is sluggish, moving at one mph. There are suckers and trout in the river.

The cliffs are 200' high, although the bottom quarter to half of the valley walls are actually a steep slope (45 to 70), composed of soil, scree and other material that has eroded from the cliffs and built up along their base. The sandstone faces of the cliffs are weathered, spalling, and will crumble under a climber's weight (-30% to Climb Wall attempts). They will not hold a piton or spike. The bedrock is laid down horizontally here, so there are no chimneys or fractures to aid a climber. The soft rock is easily carved and dug, so deep niches can be created to act as steps, footholds or handholds. Many creatures such as mice, chipmunks, and birds have dug small dens or nests in the cliff faces. Several raptors (including a flock of 11 bloodhawks, see the *Fiend Folio*) also nest on the cliffs.

Bloodhawks (x 11) AC 7, MV 24", HD 1+1, HP 6 each, ATK 3, Dmg d4/d4/d6, SA nil, SD nil, MR Standard, AL N, Size S, Int Animal, XP 32 each (20 xp + 2 xp/hp)

Should someone investigate the nests (a hazardous task as the cliff is unstable and the

bloodhawks will aggressively defend their nests) they will find a total of seventeen 10 GPV gems.

There are no trees in the valley, but willow shrubs grow along the river banks. Grasses (tall grass prairie) and wild-flowers blanket the valley floor, and the slopes at the base of the cliffs.

Valley's Curse and Guardians

There is a curse protecting the entire Valley. The curse does not affect those who come to pay their respect to the deceased, perform funeral and burial rituals, build new tombs, or even pass through, hunting and fishing along the way. However, those who defile a tomb are subject to a -1 penalty to all saving throws for a period of a year and a day. Those who violate the sanctity of a tomb are allowed a saving throw (verse Spells) to avoid the curse, but a saving throw must be made for each and every tomb entered. Repeated defilement results in escalating penalties: For each additional tomb entered there will be an additional -1 penalty and a 49-day increase in the curse duration.

The Valley's curse cannot be removed with a simple **Remove Curse** spell; this place is sacred to many religions and cultures so the power of the curse is greater than the norm, requiring divine intervention. The curse might (DM's choice) be lifted through a quest sponsored by an appropriate deity.

Each of the three shrines is also protected by a unique curse (as described below).

A residual ward of the long forgotten God of the Dead, there is a band of 8 Guardians of the Dead. These Guardians of the Dead appear as simple skeletons, wearing battered and tarnished bronze armor (including bronze helms and shields), and they wield short swords. The Guardians cannot be turned, and even if destroyed, the power of the God of the Dead causes them to reform each night. These creatures will pursue tomb robbers out of the Valley, honing in on them relentlessly. The Guardians must be destroyed 9 times to finally defeat pursuit.

The Guardians of the Dead are not evil, and their charge is to protect the remains of those who have been interred in this location, and to revenge them when necessary. If a party is camping in the Valley but has not defiled any tombs, they may see the Guardians patrolling. However the Guardians will not approach simple travelers, those visiting to pay homage to the dead or worship at a shrine, or prepare a new burial niche or tomb. Should the party defiled a tomb, the Guardians will attack, fighting intelligently and without fear or quarter.

Guardians of the Dead (x 8) (AC 2, MV 18", HD 3+3, HP 27 each, ATT 2, DMG 1d6+1 per attack, SA +3 to initiative; strike as 6 HD creature; able to harm any creature, SD immune to turning, sleep, charm, cold, poison of fear; ½ damage from slashing/piercing weapons; regenerate 1 hp/round, MR standard, INT Average, AL N, XPV 318 each)

Turning Undead

Undead may be turned here, but not dispelled/disrupted. As this is the final resting place of the individuals buried here, and they were buried with ceremonies and rituals, the souls and spirits of the undead are strongly anchored here. All turning attempts are made at an effective level 2 lower than the cleric, and any D results are instead treated as a T.

The Shrines

There are three shrines on the floor of the Valley, each dedicated to a different death-oriented deity. The specifics are up to the DM to determine, but at least one should represent a forgotten deity.

The Pool Shrine. As already noted, one shrine is located next to the pool at the base of the waterfall, beside a large funeral brier. One culture who uses (used?) this valley burned their dead and scattered the ashes into the pool, allowing the River of Souls to carry the last of the physical remains on their final journey.

The pool has items thrown in it (possibly including coins, jewelry and other treasure, DM's choice) but is protected by spirits (4 spirits, each

equal to a Water Weird of maximum hit points) and a curse. Those who defile the shrine or the pool will suffer nightmares for 13 days, and during that time they will be unable to sleep or rest (suffering a -2 penalty to initiative and surprise rolls, and spell casters will be unable to regain spells). Furthermore, the victim of the curse will automatically fail all saving throws vs. fear until such a time as the curse is removed, requiring a cleric or magic-user of 14th level or greater. Note this curse is powerful enough to defeat the cavalier's immunity to fear effects.

Water Spirits(4): AC 4; HD 3+3; HP 16 each; MV 12"; AT: 0—form in two rounds from water to strike as a six-hit-dice monster; target must save vs. paralyzation or be dragged into the water, causing drowning in a number of segments equal to the victim's Constitution score (see page 100 of the *Monster Manual* for more information; INT Ave; AL N; can be temporarily turned as a six-hit-dice undead. Note: these are not elementals but water animated by an undead spirit. XP 370 xp + 4 xp/hp = 434 xpv

The Obelisk Shrine. This shrine is a short obelisk, cylindrical, carved from grey granite standing 9' high and approximately 6' in diameter, the base is sunk 4' into the earth. The obelisk is decorated with carved glyphs and images, although these are weathered and barely readable. The glyphs and images praise a deity of death and rebirth, and they call upon that deity to escort the souls of the deceased to the afterlife and protect the sanctity of their tombs. The Obelisk is a remnant of the original people who used this valley as a burial ground, and it is holy to a god no longer worshipped by the residents of this region.

Anyone attempting to damage or deface this shrine will be subject to an **Energy Drain** attack as per the 9th level magic-user spell. Repeated attempts to damage the obelisk will result in repeated energy drains and the appearance of the Guardians of the Dead. Anyone who is drained to fewer than 0 levels will immediately rise as a juju zombie who will defend the obelisk.

DM's Note: the obelisk might stand atop the entry to a buried shrine and tomb complex, sacred to this forgotten deity. Of course, surviving the energy drain curse and the Guardians of the Dead and actually moving the obelisk to gain entry to such a tomb will be a challenge.

The Circle Shrine. This shrine is a low stone "table", 8' long, 5' wide, and 3' high. It is known as the Circle Shrine because wooden and stone benches are placed in a circle around it, providing seating for those who attend funeral services. The deceased are laid upon it, and last rites are read over them, those attending the funeral pay their last respects, and the body is cremated or carried to a grave or tomb. Signs of past funerals can be seen in fire damage, including some piles of ashes.

This shrine is located close to the mouth of the Valley of Eternal Rest, and it is actively used by worshippers of a local pantheon. Some refer to this as the Garden Shrine, as some worshippers have planted flowers and flowering shrubs around it, and they tend these flowers during the spring and summer.

The Circle Shrine is protected by the curse of slow healing. Anyone who defiles the shrine, including bringing violence to those who would use it for its intended purpose, is subject to a powerful curse (remember that this location is sacred to an entire pantheon). For a period of nine full moons (one full moon per deity in the pantheon) the PC will receive minimum benefit from any curative magic, and no benefit from any curative spells cast by a deity of this pantheon. Should clerics of this pantheon defile the shrine, they will immediately be stripped of their spell casting abilities until they perform atonement and return to the good graces of their deity.

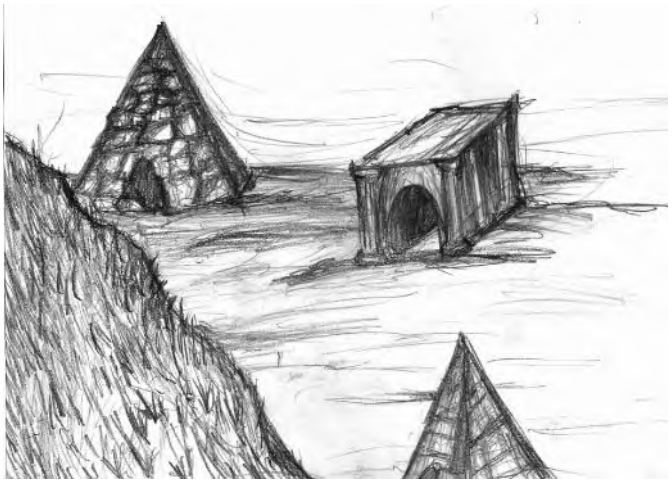
The Occupants

In addition to the Guardians of the Dead, each tomb may have its own occupants (see below for details), but there are a few creatures or entities that make the Valley home. Oddly, there is some small wildlife (rabbits, mice, moles, and coyotes that hunt them), and they do not seem to be bothered by the undead. In fact most of the undead rest peacefully until their tombs or the sanctity of the Valley is disturbed.

Daytime Wandering Monsters

There is a 1 in 10 chance for an encounter, roll every 12 hours.

d100	Monster
01-20	Small game, such as rabbit, grouse, or a similar critter.
21-30	Raptor. 60% lone hawk or eagle, 40% Bloodhawks.
31-50	Large game such as deer, antelope, elk or other creature appropriate to the campaign, likely just passing through
51-60	Tomb robbers (See the *Monster Manual* , p. 66, *Bandits,* adjust difficulty according to party strength). They will be cautious, expect trouble, and will defend themselves violently.
61-75	Worshippers (50% burial party, 25% relative paying respects, 25% clergy)
76-85	Hunters (50% human, 50% gnoll, bugbear or orc). This group is passing through and not looking for trouble, although they'll put up a fighting withdrawal if necessary – and return with reinforcements.
86-99	Spooky, but non-violent occurrence, e.g., someone feels fingers on their spine, a voice drifts across the Valley echoing and calling out one of the PC's name, wine turns to vinegar, food spoils or tastes like ashes, horse bolts, etc.)
00	DM's choice/special, e.g., insane necromancer seeking to raise an army of the dead, sage interested in the history of this place, divine manifestation, dragon aloft, etc.



Night-Time Wandering Monsters

There is a 1 in 10 chance for an encounter, roll every 12 hours.

d100	Monster
01-10	Small game (mouse, rabbits, coyote)
11-20	Flying hunters (30% owl or 70% bats)
21-40	Guardians of the Dead (see below)
41-50	Tomb Robber (see daytime description)
51-65	Ghoul pack (2d12 ghouls). These prowl the valley looking for live prey, and will attack immediately.
66-75	Giant Bat/Doombat (80%/20%)
76-85	Wailing, weeping, or other cries (1 in 4 or at DM's discretion). This is a set-up for an ambush by leucrotta, intelligent undead or tomb robbers, etc.
86-99	Spooky but non-violent occurrence, e.g. camp fires die or flare up, or changes to green flames, PC feels fingers on their spine, wine turns to vinegar, food spoils or tastes like ashes, horse bolts, etc.)
00	DM's choice or special, e.g., a ghost appears and converses with the characters, divine manifestation, necromancer and undead minions, etc.

The Tombs

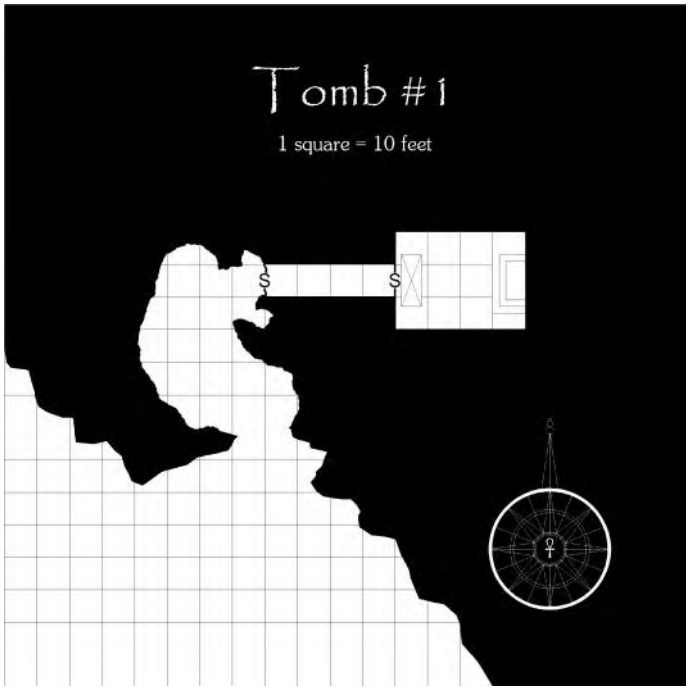
There are literally scores of tombs dug into the cliff faces and valley floor. They range from a simple graves (a hole in the ground) to multi-room tombs with physical and magical traps and protections. Over 1,000 graves have been dug, but not everything interred here is human or even demi-human. The DM is encouraged to incorporate tombs of their own design in the Valley.

The keyed tombs are described below:

Tomb #1 – The Ancient Warrior

by Andrew Hamilton

A warrior-chief was interred in this tomb by his clan after he died in battle, defending their ancestral lands.



The entrance to this tomb is a secret door, hidden by loose sandstone at the back of a cave (currently unoccupied) and trapped with a deadfall trap (-15% to find and remove traps, as the mechanisms are on the inside of the door). The trap causes suspended rocks on either side of the door to fall, causing 2d6+2 hp of damage to those in a 7' radius around the door (save vs paralyzation for no damage).

The first room of the tomb is a long narrow hallway, along which 12 armored skeletons slump in alcoves. The skeletons animate and attack as soon as the first living being enters the hallway. Turning the skeletons is at best partially successful as they have nowhere to "flee" except to fight their way through the adventurers, and will drop their swords while doing so. Each skeleton wields an Animated Longsword. When a skeleton is destroyed, its sword will continue the attack.

Skeletons (x 12): AC 4 (corroded splint mail), HD 1, HP 7 each, M 15", ATK 1, Dmg d8+1, SA n/a, SD ½ damage from sharp weapons, limited spell immunity, MR Standard, AL N, Size M, XP 21 each

Animated Weapons (x 12): AC 6, HD 3, HP 24 each, M 12", ATK 3/2, Dmg d8+1, SA strike as 7th level fighter, SD limited spell immunity, MR save as "metal, hard", AL n/a, Size S, XP 141 each (see *New Monster*, below)

At the end of the hallway is another door, also trapped. The door is mounted on rails, and the physical effort necessary to force it open will cause the door to fly back on the rails, and the adventurer will topple forward into a pit (15' deep with stakes on the bottom, 3d6 damage) unless they make a Dexterity check at +2 penalty to the roll.

The second room in the tomb complex is the burial room of the warrior-chief. Six armored skeletons are standing and ready to attack, each accompanied by a huge canine skeleton. The skeletons leap to the attack, while the warrior-chief rises from his bed and attacks.

Wight (x 1): AC 3 (**Splinted Mail +2**), HD 4+3, HP 35, M 9", ATK 1, Dmg d4, SA energy drain, SD hit by silver or magical weapons, limited spell immunity, MR Standard, AL N, Size M, XP 715

Animal Skeletons (Dire Wolves) (x 6): AC 7, HD 4, HP 25 each, M 15", ATK 1, Dmg d8, SA n/a, SD ½ damage from sharp weapons, limited spell immunity, MR Standard, AL N, Size M, XP 185 each

Skeletons (x 6): AC 4 (corroded splint mail), HD 1, HP 7 each, M 15", ATK 1, Dmg d8+1, SA n/a, SD ½ damage from sharp weapons, limited spell immunity, MR Standard, AL N, Size M, XP 21 each

In addition to the magical splint mail it wears, the wight wears a gold armband (worth 300 gp), and a gold ring with emerald chips (worth 1,100 gp). Leaning against his funeral platform is a corroded long sword (with a silver wire wrapped hilt, 3 gp worth of silver), and a **Large Shield +1**. Engraved on the shield are runes that proudly state (in a long dead tongue) that this is the property of "The loyal Shield-Bearer and Hound-Master of Gorrik Theran".

The last treasure can be found by carefully examining the platform, where a secret compartment is located. The compartment is trapped (poison needle, save vs. poison or die). Inside is a silver box (worth 175 gp) decorated with hound motifs. This box contains 100 gp and six100 gp gems.

Loose Ends

A number of questions come to mind. Whose tomb is this, and why was he buried here? Who was Gorrik Theran? Perhaps his (or its?) tomb is also nearby?

Tomb #2 – The Bone Guardian Tomb

by Andrew Hamilton

The only entrance to this tomb is a sinkhole, where a roof collapsed. Entrance can be gained by dropping through the hole onto the spoil pile. The tomb itself is very plain, essentially a large chamber (40' by 40') carved out of the rock, with a large stone sarcophagus in the centre. The remains of several adventuring parties (14 corpses in total) lie scattered about the room, and a total of 32 skeletons stand at attention, 8 along each wall. These skeletons will immediately attack.

The skeleton guards are actually four bone guardians, magical constructs crafted from humanoid skeletons. In "first generation" form, the bone guardian appears to be 8 skeletons. As the skeletons are defeated and "destroyed", the scattered bones of two skeletons will skitter and slide across the ground, merging to create a "second generation" bone guardian with four arms. A similar merging of two second generation bone guardians occurs to create a third generation bone guardian, and two third generation bone guardians merge after destruction to create an "apex" bone guardian.

Given that there are 32 skeletons to start with, astute players may start doing the math, and not like the potential outcome, which is fine. Let them scare themselves.

Bone Guardians (x 32): AC 7, HD 1, HP 6 each, MV 15", ATK 1, Dmg 1d6, SA recombination, SD ½ damage from edged/piercing weapons, immune to sleep, charm,and poison, ½ damage from cold, MR Standard, AL N, Size M, XP 24 each (18 + 1 xp/hp)

Second Generation (x 16) (AC 6, HD 2, HP 12 each, MV 12", ATK 2, Dmg 1d8 (x 2), XP 60 each (36 + 2 xp/hp)

Third Generation (x 8) (AC 4, HD 4, Hp 24 each, MV 9", ATK 3, Dmg 1d10 (x 3) XP 206 each (110 + 4 xp/hp)

Apex Generation (x 4) (AC 2, HD 8, Hp 48 each, MV 6", ATK 4, Dmg 1d12 (x 4), XP 1,380 each (900 + 10 xp/hp)

Once the bone guardians have been destroyed, adventurers will be able to more carefully examine the tomb. There are three things of interest, the original entrance, the sarcophagus, and the dead adventurers.

The original entrance is sealed from the outside with stone and mortar. Similarly, the entrance tunnel is filled with dirt and rock, and hidden from the outside.

The actual sarcophagus is sealed with a **Stone Shape** spell, and has **Explosive Runes** (6d4 hp damage) carved on it. There is also a warning carved into the lid, "Inside Lies The Great Terror – Hidden Here From The Light of Day". Opening the sarcophagus will require the use of hammers and chisels, and a lot of muscle.

Inside the sarcophagus is a hordling, sealed here centuries ago by local tribesmen because they lacked the magical weapons necessary to destroy the monster. If freed, the hordling attacks without delay, having gone completely insane from centuries of imprisonment. It will fight aggressively, but use its powers to the best of its ability.

The hordling is an extremely powerful member of its race, roughly man sized (just shy of 6' tall) and very scrawny. It is hairless with coal black skin except for reddish and purple highlights at the extremities. Its head is human-sized, with a huge jaw that has elastic enabling it to engulf something 1' in size. The jaw is filled with ragged, razor sharp teeth. Its eyes glow purple, but they are small (the size of a dime) and sunken. Large, fan-like ears almost form a crest. The creature's arms can stretch to a length of 12', and have wicked claws. Its tail, tipped with barbs, stretches from 3' to 15' in length. The hordling has an effective strength of 18/99.

Hordling (x 1) (AC 0, MV 15", HD 9, Hp 72, ATTK 4 (bite, claws x 2, tail lash), Dmg 2d4 (bite), d6+5 (x2, claws), d4 (tail lash), SA on double claw strike, constrict (d6+5 dmg per round,

automatically hit with bite), haste (2/day), SD +2 or better weapon to hit, regenerate 2 hp per round including fire and acid damage, MR 30%, AL NE, Int High, Size M, XP 3,964)

The deceased adventurers include 7 fighters or warriors, 3 clerics, 2 thieves, and 2 magic-users.

Fighter 1 – wears damaged chainmail, with a long sword and round shield in hand, and a hand axe at his belt. In a belt pouch is 12 cp, 11 sp, and 24 gp.

Fighter 2 – wears ring mail, carries a large shield and a club, with a long sword in a scabbard slung across his back. In a pouch on a cord around his neck and under his armor is a 19 cp, 8 sp, and 14 gp.

Fighter 3 – wears plate mail and has a footman's mace close at hand. His discarded two handed sword lies along one of the walls. He wears a gold ring (worth 50 gp), and has a purse (under his armor) with 20 sp, 18 gp, and 6 pp.

Fighter 4 – wears studded leather armor, has a small shield, a broken spear, and a broadsword. He has a purse tucked into his backpack (which contains camping gear) with 34 cp, 18 sp, and 5 gp.

Fighter 5 – wears splint mail, has a sundered shield and battered helm, and holds a footmans' mace. A long sword is in a scabbard at his side, and his sword belt is decorated with silver studs (60 gpv). His purse (under his armor) holds 31 sp, 6 ep and 13 gp. In the backpack are 3 flasks of oil in steel containers and a tinderbox.

Fighter 6 – a tall, husky female, this corpse wears splint mail and bears a two-handed sword. An ornate but functional silver dagger (75 gp) is tucked into her belt, and a silver holy symbol (50 gpv, local war god) is on a cord about her neck. Her purse holds 29 sp, 7 ep and 5 gp.

Fighter 7 – wears chain mail, has a buckler, a footman's mace, a long sword at his hip, and a quiver of crossbow bolts. His discarded heavy crossbow is at the entrance. His purse contains 12 cp and 9 sp, but he wears a silver bracer (60 gpv), and has 2 100 gp gems tucked in a boot, wrapped in cloth.

Cleric 1 – wears chain mail and has a **Round Shield +1** and footmans mace. She carries a silver holy symbol (50 gpv, of a god of commerce). Her purse (tucked under her armor) holds 19 sp, 14 ep, 27 gp, and 3 pp. In her backpack are some prayer books and a journal.

Cleric 2 – wears ring mail, carries a round shield and a flail, and a holy symbol (50 gpv, to a deity of agriculture). He has a belt pouch (9 sp and 3 gp), and three vials of holy water (3 additional vials are broken).

Cleric 3 – wears plate mail, carries a shield and **Footman's Mace +1**, has a silver holy symbol (50 gpv, of a deity of courage and heroism), and wears a silver armband decorated with agates (worth 110 gpv). In the bottom of his backpack is a journal, some prayer books, and a pouch of 17 gp.

Thief 1 – wearing tattered leather armor, with a very plain looking **Short Sword +2** (due to its properties, this sword does not radiate magic, and has the same effects as an **Amulet of Proof vs. Detection & Location** when carried or held, 5,000 xpv, 40,000 gpv). In a hidden purse are 34 sp, and sewn into his boot cuffs are another 30 pp (15 per boot).

Thief 2 – wears leather armor, and has a short sword in her left hand and a dagger in her right hand, there are another 4 daggers (including one silver dagger worth 35 gp) tucked in her boots and sleeves. A purse hangs on a cord around her neck with 6 sp, 19 gp and 2 pp, and a carefully folded scroll is concealed in her backpack (illusionist spells cast at 9th level: Blur, Non-Detection, and Minor Creation).

Magic-User 1 – dressed in plain traveling clothes this magic-user is lying face down on top of his oaken staff. In his backpack is a traveling spell book containing the following spells: Armor, Magic Missile, Sleep, Flaming Sphere, and Web. He also has a purse with 34 sp and 19 gp.

Magic-User 2 – wearing the classic robes (with the bushy beard and pointed hat as well), this magic-user wears a golden signet ring (85 gpv, an indication this fellow is minor nobility), and has 6 pp in his purse. There is also a huge sheaf

of letters in his backpack that provide more details about his family and identity.

Loose Ends

If the hordling escapes it will begin a campaign of terror in the countryside, slaughtering livestock and families in outlying farms. The adventurers will be blamed for unleashing this horror on the community, and the authorities will expect them to do something about it.

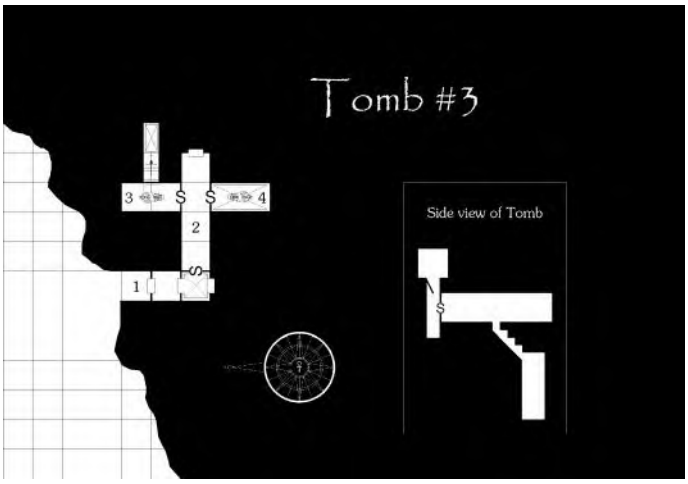
Some of the deceased adventurers have personal belongings that may provide clues to their identities. In particular, the churches of the various clerics would appreciate knowing what became of them, and that they received appropriate last rites.

Selling the noble's signet ring might bring trouble, as the family will find out, and will send agents to investigate what happened. Alternately, returning the ring and possessions of the noble may garner a reward, and demonstrate the party's trustworthiness (which may lead to offers of employment).

Tomb #3 – Trap Tomb

by Andrew Hamilton

The entry to this Tomb is concealed by a permanent illusion, looking like the natural sandstone of the cliff. Unfortunately, erosion has changed the face of the cliff, and now the illusion creates the appearance of a cliff face about 3' in front of the remainder of the cliff, actually drawing attention to the tomb entrance.



1) The Trapped Entrance

The entrance to the tomb is a series of three trapped doors. The entry door is set into an alcove, and is mortared shut. The trap here is a deadfall that is held up in place by the door. Forcing the door open drops the alcove roof (for 4d6 hp of damage).

The second door (5' in from the first door) is mortared and spiked into place, opens outward and must be chiseled loose. When it opens, a spiked ball swings down from behind (inflicts 2d6+2 hp) and the threshold is trapped with a **Glyph of Warding**.

The area beyond the second door is an empty 10' by 10' room, the floor of which covers a pit 20' deep. The third door, situated directly across from the second door, is false, and when opened the floor drops away into the 20' pit.

2) The Hall of Memory

The real tomb entry is a secret door 15' up the pit wall. It leads to a short hallway, the walls of brick and plaster, decorated with a tile mosaic showing the life of a skilled warrior-priest defeating enemies, aiding the poor, raising sons, blessing marriages, etc.

There are two tombs hidden behind secret doors behind the mosaic. Because the doors have been plastered and tiled over, they will not be noticed by an elf passing within 10'. They must be found during a regular search.

The north wall has imagery that includes chests and boxes, all of which are closed except one. These images include a foot on a closed chest, a box tucked under the warrior-priest's arm, and the warrior-priest standing in front of a defeated enemy holding up a closed coffer. One image with an open chest shows the warrior-priest dispensing coins from an open box to a crowd.

The south wall has imagery that includes books. One scene has a closed book held under the warrior-priest's arm, another has an image of a book being handed from one person to another, and a third image is of a mace, helm

and book on a table. The fourth image is of an open book on a lectern.

At the end of the hallway is a false door with an engraved message "Find Here the Legacy of Corlan the Great, Wizard-Priest of Enkar", followed by several lines of "Blessed by the Faithful of the God of Light and Hope", etc. There are also 2 series of **Explosive Runes** (6d4 hp damage) inscribed on the door, and if the door is opened (requiring two rusty locks to be picked (-10% chance each), each with a paralyzing poison needle (save vs poison or paralyzed for 1d4 hours) a fire-trap (1d4+12 hp damage) will detonate and an unfinished rock wall will be seen.

3) Illusionary Foes

There are three images of chests on the north wall, only one of which is open. Breaking the tile and plaster here will reveal a door that opens to a 10' x 20' room with a sarcophagus in the centre. Upon entry a programmed illusion will be triggered, causing a spirit seemingly tp coalesce from the dust and rush to the attack (treat as an illusionary spectre). Removing the sarcophagus lid reveals stairs down. The stairs are trapped, becoming a slide that drops anyone on them into a 20'deep pit with spikes on the bottom (4d6 damage). A stone lid then slides shut, sealing the pit, and a second programmed illusion is triggered (of the wall crumbling away in 10 locations, releasing 20 skeletons dressed in bronze armor, with bronze shields and swords. Each illusion fights as a 3 HD creature, and rises again 1 round after being defeated, the illusion runs for 12 rounds before winking out of existence.

DM Note: Both sets of illusions lack sound, which may give astute players an increased chance of detecting the illusion.

4) True Tomb

The true tomb is hidden behind the open book mosaic (there are four books on the south wall, three closed). If the sarcophagus lid is moved, the floor around the sarcophagus drops away into a 20' deep pit (the sarcophagus is on a column/pillar). Inside the sarcophagus is a mummified body (not animate). Buried with it is the following:

A gem-set holy symbol (worth 150 gpv). Anyone taking this will suffer the effects of a curse spell for 1 year and 1 day.

A golden torc set with jade (worth 3,000 gpv). Anyone taking it is cursed to receive the minimum healing effect for 1 year and one day.

A gold box (worth 100 gpv). Opening it sets of a fire trap that inflicts 1d4+12 hp damage.

A silver ring (35 gpv apparent value, actually a **Ring of Protection +1**, but coated with a contact poison that will not work until the skin gets wet, at which point the hand and arm begin swelling (making removing the ring impossible without removing the finger). The swelling is agonizing, and continues to spread to the entire body. Damage is 1d4 hp/round for 3d6 rounds (a successful save reduces damage to 1 hp/round for 3d4 rounds).

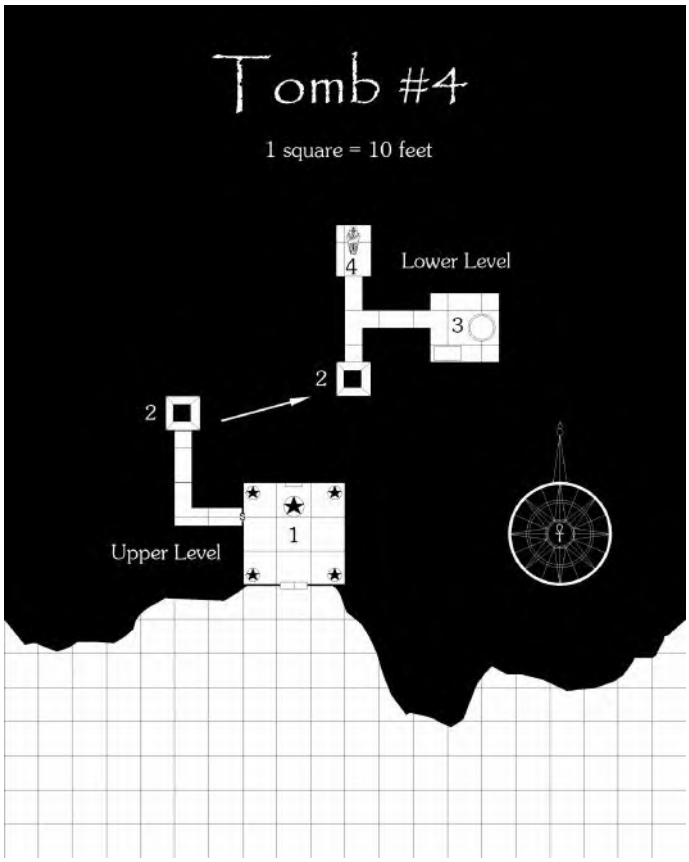
Tomb #4 – The Forgotten King

by Jay Goodenbery

Centuries ago, the king of a long-fallen kingdom was carefully preserved and interred here. None alive are likely to have ever heard of him or his realm, though searching musty tomes or old histories could unearth stories about him.

1) The False Tomb.

The front door of the tomb is a huge bronze portal, scribed with runes and glyphs (most are warnings against grave-robbing, but one is a Glyph of Warding cast by a 12th level cleric, that will deal 24 points of electrical damage to anyone who tries to open the great door). The runes are in a dead language, but a Comprehend Languages will reveal their nature.



Inside is a small stone chamber, the walls engraved with a bas-relief showing the deeds of the king (triumphing over his enemies in battle, passing judgment from his throne, casting down demons, and so forth). At the far end is what appears to be a stone door, this one also covered in engraved runes (these recite the lineage and titles of the king). Standing before it is a statue of the king, clad in rich robes, a torc-collar bearing a scarab, and an elaborate metal headdress, holding a rod of office. In each corner stands a stone statue of a warrior clad in a skirt, breastplate, bracers, greaves, and helmet; each holds a stone khopesh sword crossed over their chest. Their faces are grim and they wear a narrow beard with no mustache. Laid before the foot of the king-statue are a scattering of coins (32 sp, 18 ep, 24 gp, and 7 pp), several small clay or pottery dishes holding small amounts of long-dried and desiccated matter (once flowers or food offerings), and scraps of ancient, brittle parchment (poems or prayers), that are likely to crumble to dust if disturbed.

Once more, a Comprehend Languages will reveal the inscription. It reads something like the following (DM's can elaborate based on their own campaign world):

Here lies Dankara Garai, Fourth of His Name, Shaker of the Heavens, Vanquisher of the Scions of Val-Kur, Master of the Sapphire Scarab, Smiter of the Unworthy, Whose Fists are the saviors of his people, Beloved of Denjera of the raven hair, son of Chuma the Foe-Slayer, son of Gyasi the Wise, son of Khalid the Twice-Born, etc etc. in the same vein for several paragraphs.

The stone door is actually a false door, and cannot be opened. The real door to the burial chamber is a secret door in the left wall; it is opened by pressing in the scarab on the king-statue's throat.

If anyone touches either the false door or the king-statue, the four warrior-statues will animate and attack any intruder, until all are slain or fled (after which they will resume their positions). They will remember intruders and attack them immediately upon re-entry, and will also attack anyone who strikes them.

Stone Guardians (x4) (AC 2, MV 10", HD 4+4, Hp 30 each, ATT 2, Dmg 1d8+1/1d8+1, SA none, SD 1/4 damage from edged weapons, immune to normal missiles, 1/2 damage from cold/fire/electricity, other various immunities, MR special, Int Non, AL N, Size M, XP 790 each.

2) The Way Down

Beyond the secret door is a short, narrow (5') passage, leading to a vertical shaft that descends to the actual burial chamber. The shaft is a hewn stone chimney, about 4'x4', and descending 60' to a sandy floor. Midway (30') down this shaft is a trap, triggered by any pressure on special plates in the walls (if the PCs can descend without touching any of the walls, the trap will not be triggered). If the trap is triggered, scything blades will sweep across the entire shaft; anyone in their path (the person tripping it, typically) will take 2d8 damage. Note that this will also automatically sever any rope going down the shaft at this point; someone struck by the trap while climbing down must make a save vs. Paralyzation or lose their grip and fall.

The trap can be detected in the normal fashion (by a thief). Because the walls of the shaft are so smooth, anyone saying they pay close attention to the walls should also be told about the unusual crack (for the blades) that runs all the way around at the 30' point (assuming they have sufficient light to see, they should have a warning before the trap is tripped. The pressure plates are very carefully set, and will not be seen by visual inspection (except by a thief who made a successful Find Traps check).

A thief climbing down (with hands) or anyone descending the shaft by bracing against the sides will automatically trip this trap if it is not detected. Someone descending with a rope is 40% likely to trip it, unless they specify that they are bracing their feet against the walls (automatic) or that they are taking care not to touch the walls (never).

The trap automatically resets, and can strike any number of times.

3) The Embalming Room

Off a side tunnel lies the place where the king was prepared for his interment. This room is a plain stone room, containing nothing but some ancient and fragile wooden shelves, a large (4'x8') stone table, and a round stone tub or basin (8' across, about 4' deep) set in the floor. The basin is empty, but crusted with white powder (chemical residue, from bathing the corpse in preservatives).

The table holds a few scraps of linen, some dry powder or dust (remains of spices and herbs), and a bronze knife (perfectly ordinary, but worth 4 gp, perhaps 5-10x that to a historian or collector).

The shelves hold some old clay jars and pots, most of which are filled with worthless powder and crumbling residue (again, remains of herbs and spices used in the embalming process). A few are still sealed with way. One contains oil of myrrh (worth 10 gp, but considerably more to a temple or anyone interested in preserving the dead or creating mummies); if used to treat the bandages when creating a mummy, that mummy will have +1 HP per die and +1 to all saves. Another contains several old dried leaves; these are high-quality black lotus, a powerful and dangerous drug (worth 400 gp, but highly illegal in most civilized lands). Finally, on the bottom shelf is a tiny bottle holding Oil of High John the Conqueror (originally from Dragon Magazine #33; grants a +3 bonus to any weapon anointed with it for 24 hours).

4) The Burial Chamber

This small room holds the last earthly remains of King Dankara. The walls are painted with murals depicting the land of the dead (mostly rivers and weeping willows, albeit with a somewhat creepy motif). In each corner is a bronze stand lamp (unlit, but filled with oil). Against the far wall is a carved stone sarcophagus containing the king, who is (naturally enough) a mummy. He will not react when his coffin is opened, but will spring to life when he is touched (surprises on 3 in 6) or attacked. He is well-preserved, and his wrapped body is clad in finery: his golden headdress set with stripes of lapis lazuli (worth 500 gp); a golden death mask covered with fine engraving (worth 150 gp); his golden torc-collar, bearing a scarab carved from a sapphire (worth 1150 gp, but see below); a gilded breastplate set with turquoise (worth 175 gp); rich robes (now quite old and of little worth), and his rod of office, made of ebony and capped with gold at either end (worth 125 gp, but see below).

Mummy (AC 3, MV 6", HD 6+3, HP 50, ATT 1, Dmg 1d12, SA Fear, Disease, SD immune to normal weapons, half damage from magic weapons, immune to cold, other various immunities, MR special, Int Low, AL LE, Size M, XP 1550)

The king's rod of office is a Rod of Smiting (14 charges remaining). The scarab set in his torc will radiate powerful magic (conjuration and alteration). when the mystic command words ("Kaa-Jee-Daa") are spoken, the wearer of the scarab will be clad in shining azure Chainmail +3, which also grants the wearer the unarmed combat abilities of a 9th level monk (2/1 attacks for 3-12 damage each, plus chances to stun and kill as normal). The armor can be dismissed at will by touching the scarab, and can be summoned or dismissed as often as desired.

Loose Ends:

The special **Ring of Protection** that will protect one against these Stone Guardians was entrusted to the royal vizier of the fallen king; he died sometime later, and the ring was lost. If the PCs could somehow find or locate it (by special quest, or perhaps by lucky happenstance), it would make robbing the tomb much easier.

Tomb #5 – Deathtrap Tomb

by Nicole Massey

DM's Note: This crypt sits in plain sight, intended by its builders to be part of the defences of this sacred Valley. The crypt has a plain stone face, lacking ornamentation. The entry doors are made of thick oak, jacketed in bronze, and very well attached to the door frame. The doors are locked shut with a thick iron bar (as described below).

As you approach the crypt in front of you the path is mostly overgrown, making it clear that no one has been there in a very long time. The crypt is mostly overgrown, the iron bar locking the bronze doors into the crypt is rusty and glistens with an eerie shimmer, and the name above the door – Everfair – can only be read after some effort. The remains of several skeletons lie outside the door along with some rusty armor and weapons.

The moment someone touches the crypt a voice booms out, "Despoilers! Do not enter this tomb lest you face a death most swift and an end to all that you found desirable in life. None who enter leave alive. This is your only warning."

DM's Notes: There was never an Everfair family. When the necropolis was established several tombs of this type were created, though the rest have decayed to the point where they no longer function.

There is no treasure in the tomb, and no corpse either, just deadly traps to eliminate any potential tomb robbers.

First, there's the lock on the iron bar. It's a special type, with six rotating poison pins that must all be disarmed to open the lock. Touching the lock will require a save vs. Poison at -2 to keep the person who touched the lock or locking bar from dying in 2d4 rounds from contact poison that eats flesh away. The lock will also have to be opened using an object, as pins slide out of the lock sides and the insides and outsides of the locking hasp to deliver the same poison.

Anyone entering the crypt will see an empty room twenty feet on a side with a black floor of some unknown stone. Count softly backwards from twenty and at zero the floor, a force field, disappears. Beneath the party is a 400-foot shaft. The space down to one foot above the floor is an anti-magic zone in nine-foot-and-eleven-inch sections, with a one-inch section between each field consisting of vorpal wire (akin to monofilament) arrayed horizontally in a net (except for the first one-inch section—see below). Any material caught in the wire is teleported back to the top right under the level of the floor, while anything that is severed by it goes on for "further processing" below in identical nets. Feather fall spells and any spell cast after the fall starts won't work unless the player rolls 00 on percentile dice, meaning that the spell goes off in one of the inches where the field isn't working, but then he or she has to contend with the vorpal wire net. An anti-magic shell also activates surrounding the crypt and a 40' radius around it.

To add insult to injury, the first one-inch section has, instead of a vorpal net, a programmed teleport that will teleport all metal or glass on the falling character to the spot outside of the crypt.

Falling is at double the normal falling rate, as small pinprick-sized holes dot the walls, creating a suction effect in the abyss. Woe to anyone who tries to go to gaseous form.

A vorpal net will dice the falling person up into a grid ½ on a side, while the suction will cause things to pivot and tumble, so that soon the person is at best a collection of half inch cubes, though of course very messy.

Any object with a high calcium content will likewise be teleported to the outside when hitting the bottom – anything else will be teleported back up to the level just below the

force field floor to make the fall again. This teleportation field is six inches above the final floor.

Every fourth vorpal web has an astral component – making it an excellent way to cut a silver cord.

Award 1,000 experience points for any character that heeds the warning, and give no experience for any character that enters.

Finally, there is a very nasty surprise waiting at the bottom if a caster manages to cast a **Dispel Magic**: the space under the teleport field is a flattened out sphere of annihilation.

Finally, just to add insult to injury, in the one inch spaces are programmed magic mouths that laugh when anything passes by them, peals of mirth ringing out for about a minute after each one is triggered.

The only treasure in this crypt is located in a niche in the top – this is where the unseen servant tasked with applying the poison every six weeks keeps its supply of the stuff, which it makes from plants growing around the crypt.

Note: Vorpal nets will cut through mithril or adamantine with no problem.

Tomb #6 – Spider Lair

by Andrew Hamilton

This tomb has been breached and emptied by a pack of ghouls, leaving behind an empty complex which has become the home to a nest of stirges and a giant spider.

1) The Spider Web

The entry way has hanging webs, and the remains of several small bats can be seen (there are many dark little nooks and crannies in the cliff face here for bats to lair in). A giant spider lurks here, and will attack anything disturbing the web. The web is very sticky, and the spider can make the web collapse, trapping characters.

Giant Spider (x 1) AC 4, MV 3"*12", HD 4+4, HP 29, ATK 1, Dmg 2d4 + poison, SA webs, poison, SD nil, MR Standard, AL CE, Int Low, Size L, XP 385.

2) Hall and Deadfall

The doors and seals in this tomb have all been torn open, and several traps set off. A ghoul's remains can be found under a stone block between the doors to areas 3 and 4, the result of a deadfall trap set off by the ghouls.

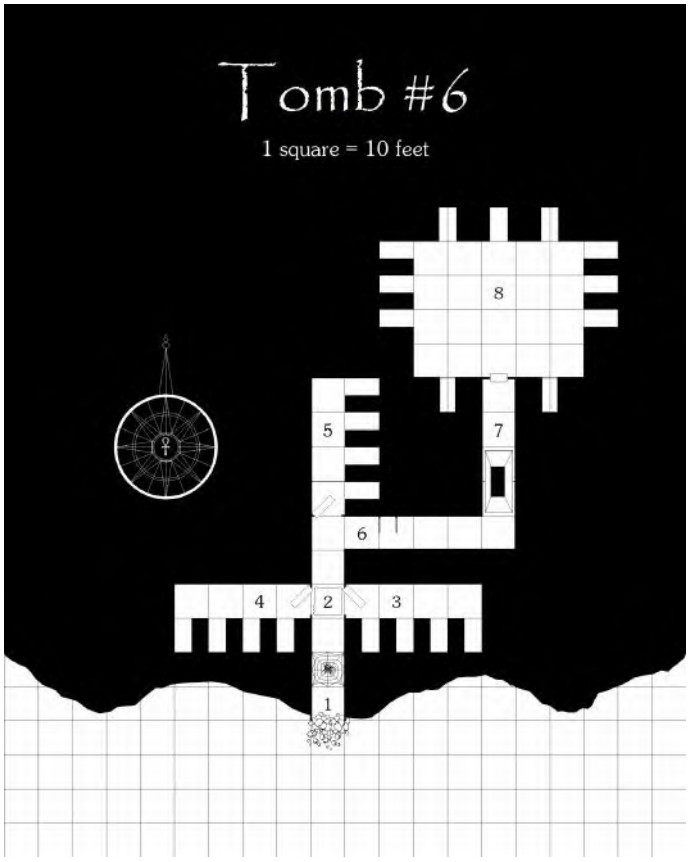
3 & 4) Burial Niches

Each of these 40' long hall ways contains eight burial niches (four pairs, one niche at floor level and one at chest height). The niches were originally bricked shut, but they have been torn open by ghouls, the contents consumed or scattered about. Sorting through the debris will find nothing of value.

5) Stirge Nest

The stirges hide back in the tomb. They have learned how to avoid the giant spider web, and the giant spider has learned to be cautious of the stirges, since they swarmed and killed two other giant spiders.

Stirges (x 13) AC 8, MV 3"/18", HD 1+1, HP 5 each, ATK 1, Dmg d3, SA blood drain, strike as 4 HD creature, SD nil, MR Standard, AL N, Size S, Int Animal, XP 46 each (36 xp + 2 xp/hp).



6) Spear Trap

This trap has already been triggered, and the remains of a ghoul hang impaled on two spears is visible.

7) Pit Trap

This 30' deep pit was once concealed by a tarp covered with mud and dust to make it blend in with the floor. Now it is open, and the remains of two ghouls lie at the bottom. Investigation reveals that one ghoul survived the fall and feasted on its pack-mate before succumbing to hunger.

8) Main Tomb

In the main crypt, a total of 11 burial niches were torn open and the bodies consumed. Scattered treasure includes five gold rings (180, 120, 100, 75 and 50 gpv respectively), 3 necklaces (300 and 200 gpv, and one broken of agate beads worth 75 gpv), 2 bracelets (gold and jade worth 400 gpv, silver worth 25 gpv), a jeweled dagger (90 gpv), a jade carving of a cat (fist sized and crude, 60 gpv), and some scattered coins (87 sp, 31 gp and 11 pp).

The tomb is occupied by an undead giant spider, slain but not eaten by ghouls, which has some ghoulish traits.

Giant Spider Ghoul (x 1) AC 4, MV 3"*12", HD 4+4, HP 33, ATK 1, Dmg 2d4 + poison + paralysis, SA webs, poison, paralysis, SD immune to sleep, charm, and mind affecting magic, turned as a 7 HD creature, MR Standard, AL CE, Int Low, Size L, XP 480.

Closing Notes

There may be literally a hundred unexplored and unlooted tombs in the Valley of Eternal Rest. The Curse might discourage some tomb robbers, but greed and PC ingenuity has a tendency to overcome almost any obstacle. Of course there may be something (or someone) specific buried here that forces the PCs to deal with the consequences of the Curse for a greater good (assuming they are of heroic bent) or for personal gain (for the more mercenary). Powerful magic, an artifact required to defeat some foe, arcane lore, a heirloom needed to claim hereditary right, etc. Some of the tombs may be veritable death traps, others a simple grave.

When various groups learn their sacred ground has been desecrated and the resting places of their ancestors and faithful violated, they will seek justice. Adventuring parties may find themselves outlaw, with multiple groups cooperating to bring them to before a judge and jury, or send them to the afterlife to face final justice.

DMs should let their imaginations run wild. For those with too much real life commitment draining their creative energy, the article *Tombs & Crypts* by James M. Ward, printed in the *Best of Dragon, Volume I* is a highly useful and highly recommended resource.

New Monster

Animated Weapon

Frequency: Rare
No. Appearing: varies (typically d4+4 or more)
Armor Class: 4
Move: 12"
Hit Dice: 3 (24 hps)
% in Lair: 100%
Treasure Type: n/a
No. of Attacks: 3/2
Damage/Attack: by weapon type +1
Special Attacks: attack as a 7th level fighter
Special Defences: limited spell immunity
Magic Resistance: Saves as "metal hard"
Intelligence: n/a
Alignment: N
Size: S
Level/X.P. Value: 177 xp (Animated Weapon)

These magical constructs, typically in the form of a sword, were a common form of guardian in the days prior to The Shattering. Magic-users and clerics both had the capability of animating weapons, although the spells and rituals once used to do so appear to be lost.

Only melee weapons may be animated (i.e. no bows, crossbows, slings, etc.). Animated weapons have a limited form of flight, and whirl or dance through the air to attack. They are

unable to rise more than 12' off of the ground however, although they are able to "fly" above water, mud or other less than solid surface without penalty.

Animated Weapons are treated as +1 for determination of what they can strike, and cause the same base damage as a normal weapon of their type, with a +1 damage bonus. Once their hit points have been depleted, the animated weapon will be ruined, and fall to the ground suddenly corroding, splintering, warping, or showing other signs of damage.

Being an animated construct rather than a living being, animated weapons are immune to Sleep, Charm, ESP, or spells that only affect living things (e.g. **Magic Missile**). Furthermore, animated weapons do not save using the "monster" saving throw table, they save as "metal hard" under the object saving throw table.

Greater Animated Weapons

There are rumors of animated magical weapons, the result is a more powerful and deadly construct. The "greater animated weapon" gains the to hit and damage bonuses of the weapon, the AC is reduced by the "plus" of the weapon, the weapon attacks twice per melee round, and the weapon gains additional hit points (equal to 3x the "plus"). The animated weapon saves at a bonus equal to the "plus" of the weapon. The downside to using a magical weapon in the creation of an animated weapon is that upon the depletion of its hit points, it is likely to be destroyed and useless in the same manner as the standard **Animated Weapon**, with only a 1% chance per "plus" of surviving.

We welcome your creatures, spells, items, adventure seeds, and other submissions! Send them to:

submissions@and-mag.com.

We reserve the right to copy edit submissions for length, grammar, and

Potions of Power

by Bryan Fazekas

Potion of Dweomercraeft

This potion has an effect upon spellcasters similar in nature to that of Heroism on fighters. When a spellcaster imbibes this potion he gains additional levels as would a fighter of the same level imbibing Heroism. These additional level(s) have no effect upon combat ability, but do increase spell casting ability and saving throws. The spellcaster gains no extra spells, but the casting of memorized spells is at a higher level of experience as far a magic resistance, duration, range, and affects are concerned. Extra hit points are gained, atlough the dice are d4's instead of d10's.

Potion of Super-Dweomercraeft

This potion is an upgraded version of the Dweomercraeft potion. It has effects similar to Super-Heroism with the modifications noted in the description of Dweomercraeft.

Potion of Ultra-Dweomercraeft

This potion has effects similar to those granted by Ultra-Heroism, with the same modifications as Dweomercraeft.

Potion of Ultra-Heroism

The effect of this potion is to temporarily grant extra fighting ability to any fighter or 0 level character. It works is a fashion similar but superior to Heroism or Super-Heroism, affecting any level of fighter. The duration of this ability is 5d4 rounds and the exact effects are as follows:

Level	Levels Added	Extra HD
0	7	6
1-3	6	5+1
4-6	5	4+2
7-9	4	3+3
10-12	3	2+4
13+	2	1+5

Creature Feature I: Ecology of the Bone Guardian

by Andrew Hamilton and Bryan Fazekas

"And that is how that miserable thing cut my arm off!" The old man waggled the scar-crusted stump of his right arm to emphasize that it had been cut off at mid-forearm. The audience oohed and aahed and clucked noises of sympathy. More importantly, one kind soul purchased Hal another mug of ale. Not that he needed it: at mid-morning he was well lubricated.

David thought to mention that last week Hal had told a totally different and equally implausible tale of how he lost his arm. But today he didn't feel like Hal-baiting. Instead his attention was drawn to a member of the audience, a woman who looked old – not as old as Hal – but old enough to a twelve year old. The woman wore a wide brimmed floppy hat of a style David had never seen before, and she had to be a hunch back given the shape her cloak covered.

Curious, he followed the stranger out onto the porch of the tavern where David's best friend Jake sat with his grandparents. They had been adventurers in their youth, but had retired long before David was born. Still, Trajan's stories were REAL – far better than Hal's and they weren't made of cow flop.

Trajan and his wife both smiled broadly in recognition of the woman, who in turn swept off her hat and performed an intricate bow. As she straightened David saw Jake's eyes widen. Looking at the woman David saw small horns the hat had covered. Jake started to say something but Trajan hushed him.

The three adults made small talk for a few minutes, catching up on old times, things David and Jake didn't much understand. They were twelve and a lot of the world outside of their home environment made little sense.

"That man's story was interesting," nodding her head towards the taproom, "but … hardly accurate. I know you," nodding to both, "and Etjar faced a bone guardian. What can you tell me about them?"

"Well, we were searching an old tomb, helping a priest recover a relic …"

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The four acolytes, fanatical followers of the priest like their deceased brethren, led the way. The first eight taught the survivors the wisdom of probing everything – floors, walls, ceiling, maybe even the air – with long wooden spear shafts. The ancient priest buried in this tomb intended that his eternal sleep remain undisturbed. During the century since his interment other interlopers had triggered many traps.

The traps varied greatly: pits, spears, acid, dead falls. The moldering bones verified the equality of their lethality. The late acolytes demonstrated that the traps were just as deadly as when first built.

That had been in the maze above. For the past hour the invaders cautiously traversed a curving, gently descending corridor – the devotees cautiously probing for traps, Trajan and Etjar with magical blades naked for protection and light twenty feet behind them, and Marissa and Hestan bringing up the rear. It was nervous work, the memory of the dead a constant, grim reminder of the penalty for not finding traps. Marissa kept an eye behind them so nothing would surprise them from the rear.

The corridor, smoothly finished and nearly twelve feet high and wide, imposed an oppressive feeling upon the trespassers. The grim mood made the front line tense. Normally good at estimating distances underground, Trajan felt unsure how far they had passed during the hour since exiting the maze above. He hoped that getting out wasn't going to be as lethal as getting in.

Without warning the corridor ended, opening into a room of much greater dimensions. "Halt!" called Hestan in his resonant voice. He never raised his voice but it carried. The probers froze in place like statues.

Trajan didn't know the names of any of Hestan's followers. They were eager puppies, instantly willing to do whatever the priest commanded. He never addressed them by name, and they didn't address each other in Trajan's hearing. Oddly, none showed much reaction when their predecessors died, other than relief that Hestan was safe. They were the oddest group Trajan had met.

The priest started a rhythmic chanting, words that were heard but indistinguishable and instantly forgotten, casting some unknown spell. Trajan and Etjar instinctively stepped to opposite sides of the corridor, vacating the middle in case a tangible spell effect needed to pass. But nothing passed. Bright blinding light sprang into being about 50 feet past the entrance to the room, 20 feet in the air.

Etjar estimated the room at 50 feet wide with a 30 foot ceiling. Pillars the width of a man's chest zigzagged down the room, helping to support the ceiling. The light of the priest's spell lit more than 100 feet down the way and the room extended beyond that. *"Someone put a lot of effort into excavating this room*," he thought.

Hestan softly commanded his disciples to spread out, checking behind the pillars, gently tapping and probing everything with the wooden spear shafts. The walls were bare stone but the pillars were highly ornamented with bas relief carvings of armored men in battle with animated skeletons.

It was slow going but slow-and-steady was better than triggering a trap with one's body. Trajan noticed that even in the cool of this deep, underground room the cannon fodder were sweating. *"Yah, I'd be sweating too!"* He and Etjar glanced at each other for a moment, meeting glances in sympathy for the acolytes but not breaking their vigilance. Glancing back he could see Marissa was the third part of their watchful triangle. *"She may be a bitch but Marissa always does her part."*

"Hold!" Marissa called softly. The two soldiers froze, senses straining for whatever caught the mage's attention, but the trap detectors kept at it. "Hold!" she called again, with no effect.

"Stop," Hestan called and his people froze in place. Turning to her he started to speak but she held a hand up to silence him. His face showed that he didn't like being shushed, he wasn't used to being shushed, but he had enough good sense to accept the silent rebuke. For now.

Trajan heard nothing, but Marissa's ears were better than his. He accepted her judgment that there was something afoot, adjusting his grip on his sword. Etjar did the same. The others remained frozen in place.

Then he heard it – stone scraping on stone. Faint but definitely there. Impossible to place. "*Where?*" he wondered. Marissa's ears didn't seem to help her, either.

After minutes of silence one of the disciples broke the silence. "My Lord," he started to ask a question but was interrupted by a violent rasping of rock on rock, echoing all around the vast room.

The bas relief skeletons on the first eight pillars broke free of the stone that held them, a thin veneer of stone flaking off to reveal bone. Each carried a shield and a heavy, wide-bladed sword. Surrounding the human interlopers, they moved in for the kill in a coordinated fashion, an evil looking green light glowing in each empty eye socket.

Hestan thrust his golden scepter at the nearest two, speaking loudly for the first time, his ringing voice echoing in the vast room. "By the Grace and Might of Hestarunu I command thee to flee!"

The animated skeletons surged forward, chopping at the priest. His shock at the failure of his holy command was almost his death. At the last second he interposed his scepter between his neck and slashing death. Suffering a long slice on his left arm, he ducked behind Marissa to put her between him and death.

"Typical," she grunted as she parried a swinging sword with her staff and side stepped the second one's attack. Which by-the-way left the cowardly priest without a body between him and a skeleton.

Trajan, fighting with a hand-and-a-half bastard sword, parried a sword slash and shattered the

skeleton's shield in return. He thrust with the sword, a beautiful stab that skewered the undead … sliding between its ribs with no effect. "Damnation! I know better than that!" he screamed as he dodged the next slash.

Twenty feet away Etjar snatched a flail from his belt, side stepped a lunging slash, and crushed the skeleton's head as it stumbled past him. The evil green lights dimmed.

Taking the measure of her attacker, Marissa evaded several slashes, feinted high, and struck low, shattering the thing's right knee joint. Her staff rebounded from that strike to hit the left side of its skull, flinging it to the ground.

Screaming wildly Hestan ran away from his attacker, ducking around a pillar and slamming into Etjar, spilling both to the floor. The older man had no idea what he had hit, lashing out blindly. Fortunately the soldier's armor protected him from the frantic blows. Gone was the prim, proper, and controlled senior priest – in his place was a frantic, weeping, out of control child.

Etjar extricated himself just in time to catch a hacking sword on his shield. He rolled away from the monster, trying to get to his feet. On his knees he brought his shield up and didn't see Trajan decapitate it from behind.

The weeping priest cowered against a wall, his noises eclipsed by the howls of his disciples. One was dead, one was soon to be as two skeletons hacked his prone body, and the remaining two double-teamed a skeleton with their spear shafts, the last skeleton scattered across the floor beside them.

A crackle of lightning flashed through the two hacking at the now dead body, illuminating their frames and crumbling them in a scatter of bones. Marissa stood thirty feet away, panting from the exertion of casting. The last skeleton crashed to the floor as the spear shafts cracked its joints.

The acolytes hurried over to Hestan, who had stopped screaming. He waived them off as he collected himself, physically and mentally. He looked down, not looking at anyone. The young men had seen the priest in a very unfavorable light. While it didn't seem to matter to them … it would to the priest. "Bet they end up exiled to nowhere," Trajan commented quietly to Etjar, who nodded knowingly.

"CRAP!"

Marissa didn't yell often. Her ire was usually expressed calmly and coldly, as Trajan could attest from being at the receiving end of it so often. When she did raise her voice or swore it was something bad.

Unseen forces moved the bones of the skeletons nearest the acolytes, skritching them across the floor where they jumbled into a pile. It looked like something was sorting the bones, and in a matter of seconds the broken bones knitted together and combined with other bones to create a monstrosity. The combined skeleton had four normal looking arms, a broad torso with double the normal ribs, double thick legs, and an oddly shaped head. The evilly winking green light radiated from the four empty eye sockets. It picked up two shields and two swords, and advanced upon the stunned devotees.

Frozen in terror, they stood woodenly as it advanced upon them.

Somewhere in the depths of his soul Hestan found courage. Or maybe the fear of looking badly in front of his followers outweighed mortal danger. No matter, he rushed in front of his men, thrusting out the scepter that was the symbol of his god and thundered: "By the Grace and Might of Hestarunu I command thee to flee!"

Two heavy swords powered by supernatural force sent parts of his body in multiple directions as his soul took flight from his sundered body.

Being splashed with the priest's blood and fluids woke the men from their trance. Bawling in rage they insanely battered the monstrosity with their spear shafts, forcing it to retreat. In their fury they looked to crush it.

From the side another super-skeleton scythed one man down, and the second fell as he turned to his new attacker.

Marissa realized all of the shattered skeletons were combining in pairs, creating four super skeletons. "RUN!"

Evading a skeleton she ran for the corridor out. No slouches, Trajan and Etjar followed close on her heels, but the skeletons lumbered along as fleet as the humans. Glancing back she realized there was no way they could safely run through the maze with these things on their heels. They had to stop them here. "Guard me!" she yelled again as she stopped.

Trajan nearly ran her over, his 6 foot height towering a foot over her. Agile as ever he didn't crush her, but swerved and turned in one motion. As the nearest super skeleton charged with an overhead swing he kicked it in the pelvis, knocking it back three steps, and knocking himself down in the process. "Damnation, that's heavy!"

Struggling to his feet he heard the wizard cast a spell, longer than most she used in combat. Behind the two nearest super skeletons a wall of barely seen force shimmered into existence. The two other super skeletons, done with killing the acolytes, bounced off the wall. Marissa had reduced the odds for a few minutes, dividing the enemy into manageable chunks.

Trajan side stepped powerful swings and hacked across the belly. If the thing had been even vaguely human, or just alive, the battle would be over. Bone cracked but it didn't stop. A flare of flame and a wash of heat on his side let him know that the wizard was helping Etjar – her flaming hands spell was a favorite when she was in close.

Against two blades and two shields the fight was hard. The soldier got in licks that would kill a mortal creature but barely bothered this thing.

Suddenly a point jutted from the skeleton's forehead, a shiny silver glowing point.

Etjar yanked his sword from the back of the super skeleton's skull. The evil green dimmed.

"We only have a few minutes before the magic of the wall ends. We need to be gone!" Marissa urged.

Skittering stopped them in their tracks. The pieces of the two super skeletons wriggled across the floor and rapidly formed an even bigger skeleton, this one with six arms, taller and double the weight of the previous one.

"BACK!"

Trajan and Etjar ran for the corridor as the force wall disappeared with a pop. Two super-skeletons and a super-duper version started forward as a glowing red bean flashed from the wizard's outstretched hand and exploded inside the super-duper skeleton's rib cage. Scorched bones flew in all directions!

But before the survivors could draw in a relieved breath the skittering sound of bones crabbing across the floor with no visible means of doing so filled their ear ...

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"Upon destruction the pairs from the original eight formed four tougher skeletons, then the pieces of the four formed two, and finally one?"

Trajan answered. "Marissa's fireball destroyed the second and third versions, and when the seconds formed another third but the first third didn't reform we thought we were done. Until the two thirds formed a fourth, which was truly deadly."

He took a sip of wine and added, "That's hard to follow, isn't it?"

Jake's grandmother interjected. "No, it's not hard. A pair of each version, when destroyed, forms one of the next version. There's eight, then four, then two, then one."

Trajan laughed. "I'm glad there weren't 16 to begin with!"

"Why couldn't the priest turn them?"

"Because they are a type of golem, not undead. Constructed from bones with magical force, not with unlife. Makes them deadlier than undead in some respects."

Bone Guardian

Frequency: Very Rare
No. Appearing: 1 (typically)
Armor Class: varies (see below)
Move: 15"
Hit Dice: 1 to 8 (see below)
% in Lair: 100%
Treasure Type: varies

No. of Attacks: 1 to 4 (see below)
Damage/Attack: varies (see below)
Special Attacks: None
Special Defences: 1/2 damage from cutting & piercing weapons, reformation, limited spell immunities
Magic Resistance: Standard
Intelligence: Non
Alignment: Neutral
Size: M
Level/X.P. Value: 900 xp + 10 xp/hp ("apex")
Climate: Any
Organization: Mindless Construct
Activity: Mindless Construct
Diet: none
Morale: Never checks morale

Despite appearing to be humanoid skeletons, Bone Guardians are not undead, and as such they are not subject to clerical turning or magical effects that target undead (e.g., mace of disruption). They were developed as a magical construct to cause confusion as a result of their undead appearance.

In its "first generation" (1 HD) form, the Bone Guardian appears to be 8 humanoid skeletons that are visually indistinguishable from normal skeletons. The true nature of the Bone Guardian does not become apparent until two or more of the first-generation skeletons are destroyed or killed. When two skeletons are defeated, their scattered bones will skitter and slide across the ground, merging to create a second-generation Bone Guardian with four arms (a 2-HD creature). A similar merging of two second-generation Bone Guardians occurs to create a third-generation Bone Guardian (4 HD), and two third-generation Bone Guardians merge after destruction to create an "apex" Bone Guardian (with 8 HD). Only the destruction of the apex generation Bone Guardian will result in the final destruction of the individual first-generation Bone Guardians.

As the skeletons merge to create next-generation entities, the bones twist together to make the construct more durable, thicker, heavier and larger, with multiple arms and longer, sharper claw-like fingers. A second-generation Bone Guardian has four arms, and third and apex generations have 6 arms. A human skeleton weighs approximately 35 pounds, so an apex generation Bone Guardian weighs approximately 280 pounds.

As magical automatons, Bone Guardians have immunities to certain spells and attacks. They are immune to **Sleep** and **Charm** magic (including suggestions, hypnotism, etc.), fear, disintegration and poisons. Their physical nature provides additional protection, and they suffer one-half damage from cold-based attacks and edged or pointed weapons.

After assembling, the Bone Guardian will undergo a reversion if they experience a 24-hour period without combat. Each such day the Bone Guardian will disassemble one generation and regain 2 hit points. So, a Bone Guardian at the Apex generation will disassemble to a pair of third-generation Bone Guardians and regain 2 hit points (or 1 hit point per third-generation entity). The following day, the third-generation entity will disassemble into a pair of second-generation entities, regaining 2 hit points (or 1 hit point per second-generation entity), and so on.

Variants

There are credible reports of two Bone Guardian variants. The first variant was based upon the skeletons of gnolls. This guardian (encountered and destroyed by a band of seasoned adventurers) was reported to have sustained significantly more damage than a standard Bone Guardian. (DM note: This guardian would have 2 HD for each of the 8 skeletons in its first-generation form, doubling from there, and a gnoll skeleton weighs about 60 lbs, so the final apex guardian would weigh 480 pounds.)

The second variant forms a larger, two-armed skeletal amalgam with each successive generation. This Bone Guardian attacks less frequently (only 1 attack per round) but hits much harder (1d6 damage/generation).

Generation	Hit Dice	Armor Class	No. of Attacks	Damage/ Attack	Size
First	1	7	1	d6	M (5' tall)
Second	2	6	2	d8	M (6' tall)
Third	4	4	3	d10	M (6 ½' tall)
Apex	8	2	4	d12	M (7' tall)

There are also rumors of two additional Bone Guardian variants. The first is a Bone Guardian of even greater power that does not reach an apex until the fifth or sixth generation, although no credible evidence of the existence for such a powerful guardian has been presented. A Bone Guardian of this power would be a fearsome opponent. (DM Note: the progression of such a Bone Guardian is easily extrapolated from the table above.)

There are also rumors that Bone Guardians have been crafted (by the long ago Dog Knights) using the skeletons of loyal war hounds, allowing the hounds to serve and protect their master's abode long after their deaths. (DM note: these Bone Guardians would have 2 HD each in the first generational form, and would combine to create a multi-headed beast in successive generations. They are also likely to have magical senses that allow them to detect invisible or concealed creatures.)

Thief's Skeleton Key

By Ralph Glatt

This key looks like a joke key, a skeleton in the shape of a key. However in the hands of a thief it is a potent tool. When used by a thief to pick locks, this magical key adds 10% to the thief's open locks percentage. Note that this key works only on mundane locks and will not open a wizard locked door.

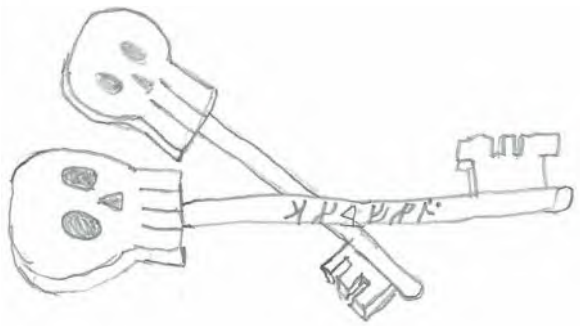
Fighter's Skeleton Key

By Ralph Glatt

This long key is remarkable due to its appearance – it is cast in the shape of a human skeleton. When thrown down and a command word is spoken, an animated human skeleton appears. The skeleton remains for 10d4 rounds and during that time will act upon simple commands spoken by the possessor of the key. The skeleton has a sword and will fight, carry things, prod things with a spear shaft, etc.

The skeleton may be summoned up to 3 times per day. Please note that if the skeleton is reduced to 0 hp or turned by a cleric, it disappears and the key may not be used again for 24 hours.

The skeleton has 8 hp and otherwise conforms to the description of the skeleton in the AD&D Monster Manual.



Creature Feature II: Failed Lich

by Bill Silvey

There's always room for more really evil monsters, hence this "beauty" from the proprietor of Delver's Dungeon.
http://www.thedelversdungeon.com/

Failed Lich

Frequency: Very Rare
Number Appearing: 1
Armor Class: 3
Move: 15"
Hit Dice: 8
% In Lair: 35%
Treasure Type: G (x2)
No. Of Attacks: 1
Damage/Attack: 1d8
Special Attacks: See Below
Special Defense: See Below
Magical Resistance: Standard
Intelligence: Genius
Alignment: Chaotic Evil
Size: M
Level/XP Value: VIII/7500 + 15/hp

A "subtype" of the dreaded Lich (q.v.), the failed lich (sometimes called a "Damned Soul") is the condition that can arise when a magic user or magic user/cleric acquires the spells and lore needed to attain lichdom, but lacks the magical power to bind itself to both the physical and spiritual planes, and/or lacks the mental discipline to maintain the state of mind required to focus its magical ability to the task of becoming a lich - that is, maintaining its will to remain living long enough.

The failed lich is in many ways like a normal lich in appearance, although a careful examination will reveal that it lacks a phylactery - one of the symptoms of its failure. It has a somewhat lessened power of its "cousin", the Lich, in that it can strike for cold damage of 1d8 points. Since the body of the failed lich has not yet received the full benefit of having it's sinews and tissues re-knit by the evil dweomer of lichdom, fire and cold based spells do normal damage. A **Raise Dead Fully** spell will utterly destroy the lich, while a **Magic Jar** will only enrage it.

In behavior, the failed lich is manifold more dangerous than the normal lich. It will, while its body is still in fair condition, attempt to use guile and offer payment to adventurers who will work for it and quest to find certain magical artifacts which will help it complete its transition before the lich-body decays completely and forces the evil spirit to a plane of Hell. In pursuit of this goal, it is diabolic. The failed lich will stop at nothing to attain what it wants, and if it means the death of its hirelings or anyone who stands in its way, so be it. If found in its lair (which is identical to that of a "normal" lich in that it will be in a desolate place filled with traps), the failed lich will defend it fanatically, using virtually every trap, magic item, and bribe at its disposal. If the failed lich is destroyed, there is a 10% chance it will come back as an evil spirit equivalent in abilities to a ghost, and seek to slay whomever destroyed it's physical body.

If it encounters a powerful magic user or cleric or combination thereof, it will attack relentlessly, seeking to take whatever spells, spell components, magic items or artifacts to use to complete its transition. It's lair is usually littered with the belongings of those unfortunate enough to have met their demise at the hands of this creature.

Creature Feature III: Vampires from the Dresden Files

by Eric Fazekas

I enjoy Jim Butcher's *Dresden File*s, and while reading them I realized these vampires are much more interesting and powerful than the ones in old-school D&D. In the books there are three vampire courts: Red, White, and Black (and a mysterious one referenced Jade).

The Red Court vampires resemble a sort of bat demon disguised as a human. They are scary in that someone you know who is human and doesn't radiate magic might suddenly turn into a giant monstrosity.

The White Court vampires are closer to being a race of succubae, feeding off others' emotions and life forces. They derive their power from an internal symbiote, referred to as a demon, which must be fed on the life force of others. They are some of the deadliest monsters to player characters because they aren't easily labeled monsters— just gorgeous humans with no claws, no fangs, no sense of evil. What could go wrong?

The Black Court vampires are similar to Bram Stoker's, with the added potential for spell casting. The most dangerous part about them is their intelligence. Due to their weaknesses (sunlight, garlic, etc.) being exposed to most of the general public, they prefer to run in packs and evaluate potential victims' strength before they attack, ensuring victory will be theirs.

I like these strains of vampires because they aren't singularly dangerous to high-level parties, but in groups, especially with an intelligent leader, they can prove a deadly and dangerous foe. Also, their powers are a great alternative to level draining, which as a player I find a monstrous concept (no saving throw!).

Vampire, Red Court

Frequency: Rare
No. Encountered: 1d8
Size: Medium
Move: 15"
Armor Class: 3
Hit Dice: 3-10
Attacks: 3
Damage: 1d4/1d4/1d6 (HD 3-5), 1d6/1d6/1d8 (HD 6-8), 2d4/2d4/2d6 (HD 9-10)
Special Attacks: see below
Special Defenses: see below
Magic Resistance: Standard
Lair Probability: 60%
Intelligence: Average-Genius
Alignment: Neutral Evil

Red Court vampires do not seem to be the terrorizing monsters the knowledgeable accuse them of being. After all, they look like gorgeous humans, with perfect bodies, beautiful eyes, and an entirely charming presence. It's no wonder that they can *charm* people just by looking into their eyes (successful save negates).

Red Court vampires can generate "flesh masks," a shell of apparently living flesh, to disguise their body into any shape and size, and they usually take the form of beautiful humans. However, underneath this lie is a repulsive monster that hardly resembles a human at all. They are around five and a half feet tall and have black, greasy, flabby skin. Their arms end in long, clawed hands, and their knees bend backwards like a chicken's. In this form instead of charming a victim, they cause *fear* that roots a victim to its spot (save versus paralyzation to negate). They have also been compared to spiders because they can climb walls and run along ceilings as if they were continually benefitting from **Spider Climb**.

Sunlight harms red vampires, causing 2d8 points of damage per round, while **Continual Light** or similar magic causes 2d4 points of damage per round. Generally they are active at night and take shelter in buildings without windows or deep underground. During the day, they rest, and at night they prowl cities, looking for easy victims to take back to their lairs and feast upon their blood.

In combat, red vampires attack with two claws and a bite. If all three attacks hit, they latch

onto the victim and drain blood at a rate of 2d6 points of damage per round (2d8 if HD is greater than 7) until either the victim or the vampire dies. Their bite is doubly dangerous because Red Court vampires' saliva produces euphoria in the victim and can **Charm** the victim (successful save negates).

Usually the victim is killed by the feeding. However, they can drain the victim to 0 hit points and infect the victim with their venom (takes one round after opponent reaches 0 hit points), and at the next dawn the victim will become a half vampire of 3 HD. When a human becomes a half vampire, they gain strength, speed, and agility nearly equal to that of a Red Court vampire(typically +4 beyond human normal). They also gain a bloodlust, feeling the constant need to drain a nearby human. Once they kill they become a full-fledged Red Court vampire. Often the vampire that turned a victim will place a helpless sacrifice near the half vampire so that it will quickly become another full vampire.

Due to competition and rivalry between vampire clans and within a clan, victims are usually eaten unless they have significant power to bring to the clan, such as magical ability. Transformed classed characters retain their non-divine class abilities even in undeath.

Red Court vampires are magically strong. One needs silver weapons (half damage) or magical weapons (full damage) in order to hurt them. Holy symbols will keep them at bay for 1d3 rounds but will not harm them or turn them.

Red vampire hunting parties are typically comprised of 2d4 members of 3 to 5 hit dice. There will usually be a leader of 6 HD and AC 2. The vampires' lair will have 5d6 members and a chief of 7 HD and AC 1. If the vampires number more than 50, the head vampire will have 8 HD and AC 0, and will be attended by several (1d3) chiefs. It is very likely that the head will be a magic-user of at least 5th level, and the chiefs may be magic-users of at least 3rd level. Larger clans (which are rare due to rivalry between members) are run by vampires of 9 or 10 HD whose hardened skin and greater speed give them an AC of -2. These will be magic-users of 7th level or higher.

Red vampire clans are independent of each other and will not work together unless there is a great threat or need, though after the defeat of the threat they will likely backstab each other.

Vampire, White Court

Frequency: Rare
No. Appearing: 1d8
Size: Medium
Move: 18"
Armor Class: 4
Hit Dice: 3-10
Attacks: 1
Damage: 2d4 (2d6 if HD>6) or by weapon type
Special Attacks: drain emotion, see below
Special Defenses: hit only by silver or magical weapons
Magic Resistance: standard
Lair Probability: 80%
Intelligence: above average-super genius
Alignment: Lawful Evil

Usually White Court vampires can pass as normal humans and are able to blend in perfectly with them. They are exceptionally beautiful (Charisma 16 to 20) and have extremely pale, white skin. Sunlight doesn't harm them nor cause them discomfort; likewise holy symbols or holy water have no effect. They have no fangs, the typical trademark of a vampire. The only distinguishing feature is that their blood is a lighter color, rather than a dark red.

Unlike other vampires who can be created by being drained of life force by another vampire, white vampires are not so easily created. They are normally born from the union of two white vampires or a white vampire and a human. However, mortals can also be converted into white vampires, though this process is unknown.

What makes white vampires dangerous is their inner symbiote. "Demon" is a better term for the symbiote, as it makes them stronger and controls them to a certain extent. The demon gives the white vampire extraordinary strength, speed, and dangerous powers with mortal emotions. But it comes at a cost. They must feed on the life force of others to satiate the

demon; otherwise it consumes their life force, eventually killing them.

White vampires are very few: Three main clans have been identified by sages. Unlike red vampires, which feast on blood, white vampires feed on a victim's emotions. One known clan feeds off of intimacy and can attempt to *charm* at will. Another derives its life force from victims' fears and can likewise *Cause Fear* as per the spell. The last feeds from others' despair, and can *Cause Hopelessness* as per the spell. These powers can be used at will and, in the case of stronger specimens, can function on all mortals within 10'. There are also rumors of other less well known clans that feed off of other emotions.

White vampires do not willingly enter combat. Not that they are weak; rather they are crafty and much prefer to trick others into fighting for them instead of risking their own lives. If forced into combat, they will attempt to cause emotion within the attacker (see above) and will fight with skill. They prefer to use weapons, magical if they have them, and are incredibly strong (+3 on strength) and can strike for great amounts of damage. Given the opportunity they cause charm/fear/hopelessness and feed upon a victim, draining 1d4 hp per round. They may "snack" on a victim or may drain them to death. Once victims have been affected they willingly allow themselves to be fed upon. In some cases the victims become addicted to being fed upon and will allow feeding at any time.

Their defenses are just as great: One needs silver (half damage) or magical (full damage) weapons in order to harm them. In addition, when their demon is fully fed they regenerate 3 hit points per round and can fully regenerate their hit points once a day, though it takes 3 rounds to do so. White vampires are immune to all poisons and paralyzation. They are not immune to their own emotional attack form and in some cases will prey upon each other, although it is believed this is done as a form of dominance or punishment.

Their best defense is their tight family bonds. Although there are rivalries and power grabs within a clan, they defend their clan's power, and some care for one another. If one white vampire has been injured and flees, the rest of the clan will protect it and will seek revenge.

A white vampire's lair is very opulent and is quite spacious, looking like a rich person's mansion, with many guards (usually mortals) and located in a large tract of land near rich mortals in order to not stand out.

Subtle manipulation is an art form of white vampires. If there is a person or group that they believe that they can mold to their own ends, they will not hesitate to try to make a treaty or trade favors to accomplish their purposes. They prefer to stay in the guise of a human and appeal to the morality of a group. For example, a male white vampire might claim to a group that his wife and kids were abducted by a group of giants (who were conveniently in the way of the clan's expansion). He offers to pay the group to take them out.

Naturally born white vampires are normal humans during childhood and puberty. As they reach maturity the symbiote inside them exerts its influence, causing them to feed on their first victim. This initial feeding always kills the victim and transforms him or her into an adult White Court vampire of 3 HD. Within a decade they gain a hit die, and in another decade a second and their natural AC reduces to 3. A decade after that they gain yet another HD. After that they will gain a HD and a point of AC roughly every 50 years. They can afford to be patient, being immortal creatures and ones not used to much overt action. The leader of each clan is old enough and experienced enough to be 9 HD and AC 0, and the King of all the clans is ancient and tough, having 10 HD and an AC of -1.

Vampire, Black Court

Frequency: Very Rare
No. Appearing: 1d4
Size: Medium
Move: 21"
Armor Class: 2
Hit Dice: 5-12
Attacks: 1
Damage: 2d8 or by weapon type

Special Attacks: spells, fear, sucking blood, surprise 5 in 6
Special Defenses: hit by magical weapons only
Magic Resistance: standard
Lair Probability: 65%
Intelligence: average to super genius
Alignment: Chaotic Evil

Black Court vampires are the stereotypical undead that comes to mind when one thinks *vampire*. They appear as humanoids whose flesh is decayed and/or dried, more closely resembling a skeleton than anything else. Older ones who have lost their flesh will be mistaken for skeletons if it weren't for their milky white eyes and a few remaining organs—the brain and the heart.

They have the weaknesses that the standard vampire has: sunlight, which kills new black vampires (5-6 HD) in 1 round and harms most others for 2d8 damage per round. The most ancient and powerful black vampires (11-12 HD) can withstand broad daylight with little inconvenience. Holy water does 2d6 hp damage per vial that splashes upon the vampire. Running water will kill the vampire if the monster is immersed in the water for 3 rounds. Garlic deals 1d4 damage to a black vampire. If a black vampire is struck through the heart with wood or decapitated, it dies. Otherwise, they can be harmed only by +1 weapons or higher, while +2 weapons will be needed to harm black vampires of 9 HD or greater.

Due to the fact that most people believe that holy symbols, garlic, and wooden stakes kill vampires, and most think there is only one type of vampire, the numbers of black vampires have declined, while the population of red and white vampires, which aren't harmed by such weapons, has increased. The black vampires that remain are usually either the oldest and strongest, or the newest ones that have recently been created.

In combat, black vampires seek to attack from behind with total surprise. If that is not possible, they send their minions (controlled mortals or weaker black vampires) into direct combat while waiting for a better opportunity. Five percent are spell-casters (65% magic-user, 15% cleric, 10% illusionist, 10% druid). Their spell-casting level is the same as their hit dice.

The process by which Black Court vampires produce new vampires is unknown; all that is known is that it involves killing the prospective vampire. Newly formed black vampires are stronger than the other courts, having 5 HD.

In combat they prefer to bite (2d8 hp damage) and on subsequent rounds automatically drain blood at 2d8 hp per round.

Black vampires' lairs are inside of buildings, underground, or in any dark place where the sun will not shine. They are usually found in poor districts as the food supply is plentiful and the ability to strike back is less. They can function during daylight hours but will not risk exposure to sunlight.

All references have been made to vampires in the form of humans, and humans being turned into vampires. However, sages report that any demi-human or humanoid race can be turned, although this is less common.

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Friend or Foe: Ajari, Kenku-Lich

by Andrew Hamilton

Description & Powers

An old kenku with magical abilities beyond those of his ken, Ajari had the misfortune to tinker in the wrong arch-mage's laboratory, inadvertently exposing himself to a potion developed by that arch-mage in an effort to achieve lichdom. Ajari's magic-user experience and his supernatural nature enabled him to survive the transformation, and he is now a weird blend of kenku and lich. When the arch-mage discovered what Ajari had done and sought to destroy him in retaliation, the kenku-lich survived the encounter due to his magic resistance and a timely claw attack that paralyzed the arch-mage.

Ajari has been a lich for less than 2 decades, and in his natural form he retains feathers and the look of a living kenku. His eyes are shrunken and hollow, though, and his feathers are brittle unless he takes time to protect them with a lotion. His feathers have turned from a steel-blue and silver color (on the back and belly, respectively) to a dusty grey color, marking him as something distinct from normal kenku. He retains the ability to fly, although he flies more slowly and with less maneuverability than when he was a living being. It is likely that he will lose the natural ability to take flight in another decade or so.

Ajari has the following spell-like abilities: **Shape Change** (once per month for a 7-day period), **Invisibility** (unlimited duration), **Call Lightning** (once per day), and **Confusion** (once per day). In addition to his spell-like abilities, Ajari has the spell-casting abilities of a 4th-level magic-user (memorizing three 1st- and two 2nd-level spells). Ajari's commonly memorized spells include some from the following list: (L1) **Affect Normal Fires**, **Charm Person**, **Dancing Lights**, **Grease**, **Magic Missile**, **Shocking Grasp**, and **Taunt;** (L2) **Audible Glamer**, **Bind**, **ESP**, **Fool's Gold**, **Irritation**, **Pyrotechnics**, **Web**, and **Wizard Lock**.

Ajari's transformation to a lich has made him very resistant to physical injury (base AC 0, harmed only by +1 or better weapons) and given him a powerful supernatural aura that makes his claws and beak inflict grievous damage (1d10 hit points damage per blow, and the target must save vs. paralyzation with each blow). When he focuses his aura, he causes fear in all creatures of 5 HD or less by his very presence.

He is immune to **Sleep, Charm, Enfeeblement, Polymorph,** cold, electricity, insanity, and death spells/symbols.

As a result of his accidental transformation, Ajari did not have an opportunity to plan for his immortality like most liches do. As a result, he does not have a secret, heavily warded dungeon complex to skulk in and plan world domination from. Instead, Ajari travels from place to place, finding temporary refuge and manipulating locals for a time before traveling on. He will fortify his dwelling as best he can, using **Wizard Lock** spells, physical traps, and charmed or manipulated dupes. He will also attempt to select inaccessible locations (like a cave in a cliff face) that are easily defended (or escaped) to use as safe holds.

Like most liches, Ajari prefers to work behind the scenes, but unlike most liches, he prefers to be a trickster, watching from an alternate shape at the edge of events. He is cognizant of the fact that his magical abilities pale compared to true liches, and he avoids clerics, fearing their ability to turn undead. He retains his disguise ability (50%), and uses it in combination with his shape-change ability to walk amongst people.

His transformation has turned Ajari from a whimsical trickster into a mean-spirited one, and the pranks and tricks that he now pulls are intended to cause harm to others. He is not above manipulating neighbors into a blood feud, instigating skirmishes between neighboring communities or kingdoms, luring adventurers to their dooms with false clues and treasure maps, etc. However, Ajari is not as clever as he thinks he is, and intelligent adversaries can outsmart him.

Ajari prefers to avoid physical confrontation, and if confronted his first instinct will be to retreat, using his powers to make an escape. Should escape prove impossible, or he has the measure of his opponents and believes that he has the advantage, Ajari will fight intelligently and deceitfully. If possible, he will send minions (preferably unknowing dupes) into the fray first and then attempt to isolate a lone opponent and attack with surprise. When forced into combat, a favorite technique is to grapple with lone foes and call lightning down upon them, relying on his immunity to electricity. Other favored techniques include using his flight ability to drop a victim from a great height (preferably halflings and gnomes, who are nice and light). His lich-touch is more effective than his katana in combat, so he will attack with claws and beak unless he is maintaining a disguise.

Ajari uses material wealth as a tool to manipulate others, and values it only for entertainment. He has much higher regard for magical treasures, however, and seeks to gain possession of them.

Using Ajari In Play

Ajari would be a credible threat for a party in the 3rd- to 7th-level range, or possibly higher if Ajari was able to make the right kind of allies. He could also fall under the influence of a greater power (such as a true lich) and be used as an agent in some grander schemes.

In campaign play Ajari can be used as a recurring villain. The kenku-lich is not the type of villain who will be found waiting in the last room of a heavily guarded dungeon complex. Instead, Ajari will try to get others to do his dirty work or just cause trouble. He tends to work alone, trusting no one but manipulating small groups or hiring dupes whenever possible. His shape-change and disguise abilities are often used to misdirect authorities or power blocks.

He is the type who will manipulate guardsmen (perhaps impersonating an officer), paladins, and other adventurers into confronting the party. Alternately, he might manipulate the party into confronting a magic-user or cleric, creating the confusion necessary to allow the kenku-lich to steal some magical item he has his eye on. He will work behind the scenes to confuse the party, trip them up, and send foes of all types at them. He would enjoy manipulating thieves' guilds, churches, and magic-users, as well as stirring up humanoids (although he finds these to be a bit of a blunt instrument).

An appropriate "first meeting" could take place on the road as Ajari pilfers something from the adventurer's belongings after sneaking in invisibly and using **Affect Normal Fires** to spook their horses. A similar ruse would work at an inn. Ajari would be interested in taking a magic-user's spell book or other magical items of various types. He might also plant evidence (a stolen item) on a PC in an effort to evade pursuit.

Greatly desiring to obtain magical items and lore, Ajari will often assume the identity of an adventurer before stealing something. He has also assumed the identity of an adventurer and started fights with soldiers, guardsmen and good temples as a means of creating distractions (as simply watching the resulting chaos is fun).

Adventure Hooks

As a trickster, Ajari has managed to make a number of enemies, and he has developed a few favorite scams and ploys. The adventurers might meet the kenku-lich, his dupes or his victims by happenstance or plan. The following adventure hooks are examples of ways in which Ajari may enter the campaign.

- Ajari has stolen a masterwork katana from a noble family (the Senhari Clan), and they are very interested in getting it back (to restore their honor). Although he once had the opportunity to trade his katana for a magical weapon, he still uses the sword because obtaining it was one of his first great scams. An accomplished samurai, Makoto Senhari, has been sent to retrieve the family's katana. Ajari hires the PCs as bodyguards once he learns that the samurai has caught up to him.

- Ajari has run afoul of an evil organization, having stolen a powerful item (like a spell book) and then manipulated a thieves' guild into trying to steal it, thus setting up the guild to take the fall for the crime. Now the enraged thieves are hunting Ajari, and the original owner of the item, a powerful magic-user, has hired the PCs to hunt down the thieves' guild, extract revenge, and recover the spell book. Meanwhile, Ajari watches from the shadows as he prepares to start his own thieves' guild.
- His constant poking around has landed Ajari in hot water with a temple of a good deity, as he stole a holy relic. Needing to evade an order of paladins hot on his heels, the kenku-lich plants the item on the PCs to buy some time.
- The kenku-lich became aware of a powerful magic item (DM's choice, but possibly a **Ring of Wishes**), but it is hidden away in a well-guarded dungeon. Ajari arranges for a "treasure map" to fall into the hands of the party, and then he shadows the party, allowing them to set off the traps, defeat the guardians and brave the dangers before swooping in to steal the treasure.

DM's Note: If the DM is willing to incorporate elements of *Oriental Adventures* into his game, give Ajari wu-jen spells (such as **Magic Missile, Ventriloquism, Wall of Fog, Warp Wood; Apparition, Bind, Fire Shuriken, Fog Cloud, Hypnotic Pattern, Misdirection, Phantasmal Force** or **Smoky Form**), which makes him a more unique opponent. In an *Oriental Adventures* setting, Ajari will have non-weapon proficiencies including reading/writing, calligraphy, heraldry and the tea ceremony.

Ajari 's Personal Statistics:

AC -3 (0 base)
MV 6"/12" (MC: D)
HD: 6
Atts: 3 (claw/claw/beak) or 1 (weapon)
Dmg: 1d10/1d10/1d10 + special or by weapon
SA: spells, spell-like abilities, paralyzation
SD: hit by +1 or better weapons, spell immunity
MR: 30%
Intelligence: Average (13)
Alignment: Neutral Evil
Size: M
Psionics: nil
HP: 41
Experience Point Value: 1,361 XP

Equipment:

Katana (of quality, +1 to hit, stolen from a samurai), **Ring of Protection +3**, **Bag of Beans**, and a **Wondrous Writing Set** (described in *Oriental Adventures* and used by Ajari to commit many forgeries). In addition, he will normally have 1 potion and 1 scroll (both of some useful effect), which he will not hesitate to use at an appropriate time.

Monk Shoes and Gloves

by Bryan Fazekas

These shoes and gloves are created in sets which cannot be divided. Each set consists of two shoes and two gloves – if any part of the set is damaged the remaining pieces loser their dweomer and become mundane items.

Usable only by monks, these foot and hand-ware empower a monk's open hand attacks to damage creatures damaged only by magical weapons. Some sets have no plus to hit or damage, but will enable the monk to effectively strike creatures requiring silver or +1 weapons to hit. Others have varying pluses to hit and damage.

A further benefit is gained, for the wearer is protected from some effects while striking. Thus a monk could use open hand attacks upon a vampire without suffering energy drain, but if the vampire should strike him, normal draining would occur.

Plus	XP Value	GP Value
+0 / +1	400	2,000
+2	800	4,000
+3	1,400	7,000
+4	2,000	10,000
+5	3,000	15,000

The Toybox: Cursed Amulets

Cursed Amulets vs. Undead

*by **&** Magazine Staff*

The **Amulet Versus Undead** is described in *Unearthed Arcana*, a very useful item for any adventurer intent on plundering tombs and ruins – particularly if the adventurer's companions do not include a cleric. Such a useful item may come with a price, for the dark forces that empower undead seek to protect their creations in subtle and insidious ways, including perverting the tools of Light & Good. One must be careful of items relied upon for protection from the undead, as those items may prove unreliable. As a case in point, following are four cursed versions of this amulet.

Amulet of Attracting Undead

Initially this amulet behaves exactly like an **Amulet Versus Undead** . However, after 2d4 uses the amulet no longer functions as a turning device and instead attracts undead. From this point forward, any undead encountered will automatically attack and preferentially target the possessor of the cursed amulet. Undead within 300' of the bearer will move to attack the bearer, continuing to seek the bearer until they find him or the bearer moves out of the 300' range.

To be rid of this item a **Remove Curse** must be cast to remove the amulet. A removed amulet loses all magic and melts into a pile of slag.

Amulet of Undead Rising

This amulet functions as an **Amulet Versus Undead** (of the 9th level); however there is a 10% chance in any melee that the amulet will spontaneously cast an animate dead (at the 9th level) animating as zombies any bodies within 3" of the amulet. Undead animated by the amulet are immune to the turning effect of the amulet. It has been reported that some few of these amulets produce stronger undead, including ghouls, ghasts, wights, and vampires.

Amulet of Undead Berserking

This amulet function as a normal **Amulet Versus Undead** (of the 7th level) – with one exception. If a turning attempt fails, the undead will be driven into a berserk rage, attacking the amulet owner and anyone between them. Berserk undead gain a +2 bonus to hit and +2 on each damage die. Unintelligent undead will attack until they or the bearer are destroyed. Intelligent undead will attack with fury for 1d4+1 rounds – at that time a successful saving throw vs. Death will allow them to flee if they are in danger of being destroyed.

Some amulets will induce a hyper berserk rage, granted an additional attack sequence each round.

Amulet of Undeath

This amulet functions exactly like a normal **Amulet Versus Undead** and no method of detection will show that it anything else. The only difference is that in a hidden compartment will be a small bit of ash from a burned undead.

Should the bearer be slain while wearing the amulet they will rise in 3 days as an undead of hit dice similar to the character's level of experience.

The newly risen undead will seek out its former companions with the intent to slay them. If one wears the amulet he will be targeted first.

If the slain character is raised from the dead before rising as undead, they will appear normal. During the following week they will begin to take on characteristics similar to the undead they are transforming into.

Unless a **Remove Curse** is cast before the seventh night the afflicted character will transform into an undead at midnight.

Spell Caster's Paradise: Affecting Undead

This monthly column features new spells.

Corpse Fire

Alteration, Necromancy
Level: Magic-User 2/Cleric 2
Components: V, S, M
Range: 3"
Casting Time: 2
Duration: 1d6 rounds + 1 round/level
Saving Throw: none
Area of Effect: 1 flame/6 levels

This spell magically alters a normal fire so that the fire only burns the dead or undead. The spell is used in a number of ways, including for use in funeral pyres (preventing the cremation of someone still living but magically suspended, for example), for use as a weapon against undead, as a defense (using fires as barriers), and even as a test (requiring people to hold their hands in the flame before entering a building, as living creatures will be unharmed but vampires and other undead will suffer harm).

The damage potential of the fire is not changed by the spell (so a torch continues to cause normal damage), but the magic of the spell allows the flame to harm any undead creature, regardless of whether the creature is normally only harmed by magical weapons or if they are immaterial.

The material component of this spell is a bit of bone and ash (for a magic-user) or the cleric's holy symbol.

Source: Andrew Hamilton

Baerden's Pain Removal

Type: abjuration
Level: Cleric 3
Components: V, S
Range: touch
Casting Time: 3 segments
Duration: permanent
Saving Throw: none
Area of Effect: special

When this spell is cast the caster relieves himself of the effects of an attack involving pain, such as a Symbol of Pain. This removes restriction on attacks and restores hit points lost because to the pain. In addition the cleric can pass on the benefits to 1 creature for every 3 levels of experience. Note that this spell cannot be cast beforehand, as it affects only existing pain.

Source: Bryan Fazekas

Quiet Dead

Necromantic
Level: Cleric 3
Components: V, S, M
Range: touch
Casting Time: 6 segments
Duration: see below
Saving Throw: none
Area of Effect: see below

This spell prevents any dead being from being animated as undead, or rising as undead. The quiet dead spell has two applications, one temporary and one permanent. In the temporary application, the spell may be cast as an area effect spell (1" radius/level) with a limited duration (1 round/level). This application is intended to prevent the **Animate Dead** spell being used on a battlefield, neutralizing the powers of necromancers and some supernatural creatures.

The permanent application of the spell affects one or more corpses (1 corpse per 6 levels of the caster). This application prevents, for all time, the corpse from being animated as undead or rising as undead if, for example, the persons had been slain by shadows or wights.

If cast on a being that is already undead, the **Quiet Dead** spell has no effect.

Source: Andrew Hamilton

Return to the Earth

Necromantic
Level: Druid 3
Components: V, S, M
Range: touch
Casting Time: 6 segments
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: 1/2 damage
Area of Effect: 1" diameter/level

This spell allows druids to counter the unnatural state of undead by bringing the natural forces of decay to bear against any corporeal undead within the area of effect, essentially causing them to rot away and be incorporated into the soil, supporting the next generation of life. The spell may only be cast while on a natural surface (grass, field, cave floor, but not pavement or a tile floor).

In appearance, the spell has some similarities to **Entangle**, as vegetation will attempt to entangle the undead. Soil will also seem to reach up and touch the undead, and insects will appear and begin crawling all over the undead. As the undead takes damage, they appear to crumble and rapidly rot, losing mass as the spell takes effect. Despite the apparent similarity to **Entangle**, movement is not restricted (although combining this spell with **Entangle** can be extremely effective).

Corporeal undead suffer 1d4 hp of damage per round, +1 point/3 levels of the druid (rounded down), although a successful saving throw vs. Death Magic will reduce the damage by half. A saving throw must be made each round.

The material component is holly or oak leaves.

Source: Andrew Hamilton

Cloak of Light

Conjuration/Summoning
Level: Cleric 4
Components: V, S, M
Range: touch
Casting Time: 6 segments
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: n/a
Area of Effect: one person

This clerical spell wraps the recipient in a cloak of bright white light, providing increased defenses against the undead. First, and perhaps most important, while protected by the spell the cleric receives a saving throw vs Death Magic at +2 when struck by an energy drain attack. The save is granted even in situation where there normally is no saving throw.

When turning undead, the cleric receives a +2 bonus to their turning rolls. The light from the cloak is intense enough to temporarily negate darkness effects within a 15' radius of the recipient (not dispel, the darkness effect will resume if the cloaked individual moves out of the darkness area of effect), and provides illumination in a 4" radius.

Lastly, the intense light provides the cleric with a +1 to hit & damage against undead, while undead suffer a -1 penalty to hit, damage and initiative when in melee with the cloak wearer.

The material component of the spell is the cleric's holy symbol.

Source: Andrew Hamilton

Corporeality

Abjuration, Necromantic
Level: Cleric 4
Components: V, S, M
Range: 4"
Casting Time: 7 segments
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: negates
Area of Effect: one undead

This spell allows a cleric to force a non-corporeal undead creature into a corporeal form. This effectively severs any ties the creature may have with another plane. The effects are two-fold. First the undead's AC becomes 8 and it may be attacked with non-magical weapons. Second, powers such as level draining or magic jar (powers associated with non-corporeality or extra-planar connections) are non-functional for the duration of the spell. The spell will force a vampire out of its gaseous form and into a corporeal form or prevent it from taking gaseous form for the duration of the spell.

The undead suffers a -1 penalty to its saving throw vs. Spells for every 4 levels of the cleric (rounded down).

The material component of the spell is the cleric's holy symbol. This spell is only available to those faiths capable of turning undead.

Source: Andrew Hamilton

Transmute Water To Blood

Type: alteration
Reversible
Level: Cleric 5
Components: V, S, M
Range: 3"
Casting Time: 8 segments
Duration: permanent
Saving Throw: none
Area of Effect: 1 cubic ft/level

When a cleric casts this spell 1 cubic foot of water per level is transformed into blood. This blood is human or demi-human in nature, i.e. it is red blood. At the sight and smell of the blood, creatures with less than 4+1 hit dice must save vs. Paralyzation at -3 or flee for 3d6 rounds. Creatures of 4+1 hit dice or better save normally. Note that this spell has no effect upon undead, extra-planar creatures, or non-intelligent monsters. A further note – many animal intelligence carnivores will actually be driven into a frenzy by the sight and smell of the blood. These will attack at +2 to hit and +1 damage per die.

The reverse of this spell is particularly nasty. One cubic foot of blood per level is transformed into water, or a single creature. The affected creature receives no saving throw, but a touch must be scored in combat. Damage is inflicted depending upon the size of the victim. All living creatures with red blood suffer damage according to size:

Size	Damage (hp)
S	1d8+3/level
M	1d8+2/level
L	1d8+1/level

Victims who suffer damage equal to more than half their total hp act as if slowed and inflict half normal damage due to weakness. This lasts 6d8 turns. The material component is a drop of blood or a drop of water for the reverse.

Source: Bryan Fazekas

Susafras' Posibolt

Type: conjuration/summoning
Level: Magic User 6
Components: V, S, M
Range: 0
Casting Time: 7 segments
Duration: instantaneous
Saving Throw: 1/2
Area of Effect: 1"x2" stroke

This spell creates a link between the caster and the Positive Material Plane. The caster draws energy and releases it as a stroke 1" wide and 2" long. All creatures in the area sustain 1d6+1 points of damage for every 2 levels of experience. Failure to save indicates that all items carried by victims must save vs. Lightning or be destroyed. Creatures connected with the Negative Material Plane suffer double damage with no save allowed. A tentacle of a xag-ya is required.

The Archmage Susafras produced a second spell of similar but opposite qualities, the Negabolt. This version of the spell creates a link between the caster and the Negative Material Plane, but is otherwise identical to the Posibolt. Creatures connected with the Positive Material Plane take double damage with no saving throw allowed. The material component is a tentacle of a xeg-yi.

Source: Bryan Fazekas

One Page Dungeon: Skeletons

By Andrew Hamilton

This column features an adventure which covers the front and back of 1 sheet.

Over a decade ago, a powerful necromancer animated an army of skeletons and marched that army into the lair of a green dragon. The green dragon exhausted its breath weapon, destroying scores of the skeletons, and then fell to the skeletal onslaught and necromancer's magic. After selectively looting the dragon's horde, the necromancer left, leaving behind his skeletal army.

1) The Clearing

Scores of skeletons now lie dormant in a large forest meadow. The meadow and surrounding woods are completely silent, with no signs of animal life anywhere. As the result of the presence of scores of undead, and some of the residual effects of the magic used by the necromancer, the clearing radiates faint necromantic magic, and animates any dead creature that lies within its boundaries in 1d4 hours of the creature being slain or the body brought into the clearing. However, should any living creature larger than a rabbit enter the meadow, the skeletons rise up and converge upon that creature.

DM's Notes

a) The undead statistics are determined using the **Animate Dead** spell guidance in the DMG (page 41).

b) Note that turning is only successful once per cleric against this group of undead as they are technically all the same type, skeletons (DMG page 65). Turning affects the lowest hit dice creatures first, so the scores of bird, rabbit, weasel, squirrel, etc. skeletons will likely be dispelled or turned, leaving the larger skeletons for the adventurers to face.

c) The clearing is considered to be an evil area (DMG page 66) and all turning attempts are made at a -2 die roll penalty.

General Skeleton Stat Block: AC 7; MV 15"; SD 1/2 damage from edged & piercing weapons, immune to sleep, charm, poison; MR Standard; AL N.

Tiny Skeletons (rabbits, birds, squirrels, etc.) (x 53) (HD 1/4, hp 1 each, Atts 1, Dmg 1, 10 xp each)

Deer Skeletons (x 6) (HD 1, hp 6 each, Atts 1, Dmg d4, 24 xp each)

Human/Elf Skeletons (x 15) (HD 1, hp 6 each, Atts 1, Dmg d6, 24 xp each)

Dog/Wolf Skeletons (x 8) (HD 2, hp 11 each, Atts 1, Dmg d6, 58 xp each)

Cow Skeletons (x 7) (HD 2, hp 9 each, Atts 2, Dmg d4 (x 2), 54 xp each)

Gnoll Skeletons (x 9) (HD 2, hp 10 each, Atts 1, Dmg d8, 56 xp each)

Wild Boar Skeletons (x 4) (HD 3, hp 14 each, Atts 1, Dmg 2d4, 107 xp each)

Mountain Lion Skeleton (x 1) (HD 4, hp 19, Atts 3, Dmg d6 (x 3), 186 xp)

Moose Skeletons (x 2) (HD 4, hp 19 each, Atts 2, Dmg d6 (x 2), 186 xp each)

Brown Bear Skeletons (x 2) (HD 5, hp 24 each. Atts 3, Dmg d6 (x 3), 290 xp each)

A careful search of the clearing will also find some treasure that was carried by the humans and gnolls who died in the clearing (66 ep and 128 gp).

2) The Cave Entrance

Should the party get within 20' of the entrance to the dragon's lair (a burrow dug into the ground), a green dragon skeleton will emerge and join the attack.

Green Dragon Skeleton (x 1): AC 7; HD 9; HP 42; MV 15"; ATK 3; Dmg 1d6/1d6/2d10; SA n/a; SD 1/2 damage from edged & piercing

weapons; immune to sleep; charm; poison; MR Standard; AL N; Size L; XP 1,764.

3) The Hoard Cave

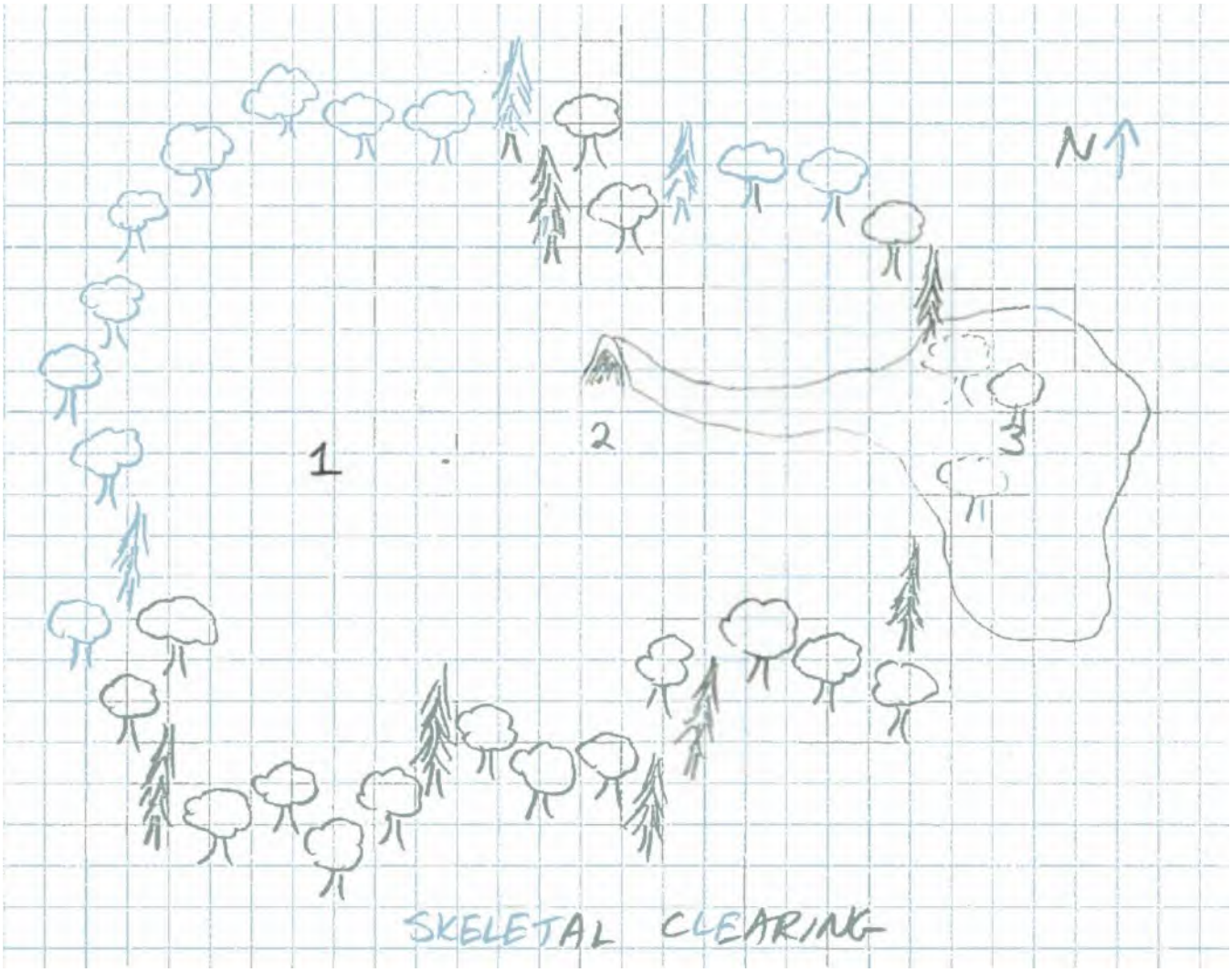
The residual dragon's horde is large in size, but low in value, as the necromancer claimed the most valuable items. The remaining treasure pile consists of 18,948 cp and 9,462 sp. Mixed in with the treasure hoard are skeletal remains of humanoid creatures, bits of rusted and broken armor & weapons, some cloth scraps and leather, and other bits of valueless trash. Some of the skeletal remains are animate, and will attack.

Crawling Claws (x 23) AC 7; HD 1/2 ; HP 3 each; MV 9"; ATK 1; Dmg 1d4 vs armored foes; 1d6 vs unarmored foes; SA leap 15'; SD 1/2 damage from edged weapons; no damage bonus when struck by magical weapons; immune to control undead; turning; & holy water; SW cold makes them brittle; suffer +1 damage from melee weapons; MR Standard; AL N; Size S; XP 16 each.

DM's Notes

The crawling claws represent any partial piece of skeleton that could conceivably move and attack, such as a damaged ribcage scuttling like a spider, a skull rolling to attack with a bite, etc.

Dread (x 6) AC 6; HD 3+3; HP 17 each; MV 6"/14" (MC:B); ATK 1; Dmg 1d4 or by weapon; SA n/a; SD immune to sleep; hold & charm; immune to cold; 1/2 damage from edged or piercing weapons; immune to shatter; disintegration; polymorph; SW turned as a shadow; MR Standard; AL N; Size S; XP 228 each.



Featured Fiction: An Errand

By Nicole Massey

Each issue features a short fantasy themed fiction.

Prologue

The man shivered in the cold. He looked down at his mostly bare body, the bruises from the strong man who accosted him covering his arms, chest, and legs. Though he was not seriously harmed, he would have to walk a great distance to the monastery to get another robe and boots. What would make such a man do something like this? The shaken cleric tried to forget the look of the brutish man's face, his angry sneer and haunted eyes. And he tried to forget that throughout the entire beating the man never uttered a single sound.

With a shiver and a sneeze he stood up, feeling the dread of a cold coming on. Nothing for it now: It was either walk or die. So he walked, trying not to notice that his throat was getting sore and his sneezes were coming more often.

1

Mikhail the ferryman pulled on the rope. His hands burned with the effort as the rough hempen cord cut into them. With luck he'd get a passenger who could pay him enough to get some new gloves made. He dreamed of nice calfskin gloves, ones with thick pads in the palm and across the insides of the fingers. Those would last so long, and he wouldn't go home with blood on his hands every day.

As he pulled the ferry across the river the mists faded, and he saw one person, with the bodily shape of a man, standing there. Let it be a human, not an orc. Orcs never paid well, and some didn't pay at all. Elves and dwarves paid well, but this person was too tall to be a dwarf and too bulky to be an elf.

As he pulled, the ferry started to buck slightly, as it always did when the water became shallow and the current uncertain. But this meant a rest while the passengers got on. Well, the rest would be short today, with only one man.

Mikhail sighed as the man came on board, his footsteps sure and strong. He wore heavy woolen trousers, thick sturdy boots with fur inside and forming a cuff on top, and a coarse robe with a hood pulled up around his head. His face was hidden inside the hood, and his hands bore gloves, thick and dark, but worn a bit.

Mikhail said, "Welcome," but the stranger didn't speak; he just nodded his head. Mikhail reached for the rope to pull the ferry across, but the stranger reached down, and with strong powerful pulls forced the ferry back into the current. The ferry bucked and resisted for a moment at such rough treatment, but the constant pulls of the stranger settled it into a rhythm.

Mikhail reached for the rope to help out, but the stranger shook his head and pointed to the ferryman's damaged hands. Mikhail said, "Thank you, kind sir," and then sat down to catch his breath.

In what seemed like no time, the ferry was across the river and touching the dock. The stranger spiked the rope and walked to Mikhail. He reached down, placed two coins in Mikhail's hands, and strode off the ferry, his steps sure and resolute.

No one waited at the dock, so Mikhail kept resting. It was good to sit down and work the soreness out of his arms. But first he looked down at the coins in his hand, and started when he saw them. They were gold, old and slightly tarnished, but of great value. He would afford his gloves after all. He looked into the mist at the docks and said, "Thank you, kind sir."

2

Erina looked about the dining room. It was almost up to her standards, but she would have to chastise the servants once more, as the flowers on the table and sideboard were not fresh, and the rug needed beating before

tonight's company. But at least this was far better than what she'd dealt with in the past.

Pavel, her husband, came in and took off his ceremonial robes. As the high priest of Enki, he had great power and influence, and many people waited for his every word. Tonight's ball and banquet were an example of that: Folks from all of the major races in Phaten would be in attendance, and if all went well new alliances would be forged over her dining table and in her ballroom.

Pavel said, "Good day, my love. How go the preparations?"

She knew his statements of love were mere formalities, as he was not what you would call a loving man, but she didn't mind. She'd had love before, and you couldn't eat it or use it to keep the chill out of your bones.

Erina frowned. "I think we need to find some better servants, husband. These still aren't taking care of things in the way that befits our station."

He nodded. "Will they do for tonight?"

"They'll have to, I'm afraid. But I need to build a fire under them to make sure things are perfect. Look at those flowers and at that rug. It's disgraceful."

He nodded, and said, "I'm sure you can get them motivated, my love. I'll leave it to you. I have to go into town to meet with Duke Entmos of Forna. He requested a meeting regarding the disposition of one of his sons."

Erina nodded. "May Enki bless your feet, husband. I plan to have things ready for tonight long before you return."

As she heard her husband leave the room she called out, "Euquora! Neandes! Prolival! Come in here this instant!"

Ah, the duties of a lady of quality were never ending, but at least they were better than being the wife of a craftsman.

3

Pavel returned four hours later, smiling. The Duke was an ambitious man, and with his son in Pavel's entourage there were possibilities for even more improvement in Pavel's station. He entered his room, sent for his valet, Borrin, and got into his bath to get ready for the ball tonight.

As he soaked in the hot perfumed water he relaxed. Things were going well, and his wife was a big part of it. She was beautiful, so beautiful that men stopped speaking when she came into the room and women looked at her with jealousy. It was a waste for her to be a woodworker's wife, and Pavel's way of resolving that problem left her with her honor intact and able to marry again with no scandal. It was artful, to be sure. And now she was his. All things he desired became his in time, and that was how it should be, he thought. Life was good.

After dressing he went downstairs to greet his guests. As the house filled up his satisfaction grew. Duke Fingal of house Kestral was also throwing a ball tonight, but the quality of Pavel's guests spoke volumes about how he ranked in comparison to the duke. His smile was genuine.

It was much later after the dancing, the many removes of the meal, and some interesting talk amongst the men while Erina and the other women were entertained by artists and musicians, that he got a feeling that something was wrong. There was a slight uneasy feeling, a presentiment of doom, and he couldn't figure out what was causing it. Even as his guests left in their gilded carriages late in the evening the reason for the discomfort was hidden from him. As Erina directed the servants in clean-up duties he kissed her on the cheek and said, "My love, I'm going to take a walk in the garden. I won't be long."

She nodded, then directed one of the maids to wash the big tureen again as it wasn't clean enough to pass the lady of the house's exacting inspection.

4

As Pavel walked through the garden, a trail of an exotic pipeweed blend issuing from his pipe, he couldn't shake the feeling that something was wrong. It was this niggling feeling of doom, a slight pressure behind him, like someone was walking up behind him that meant him harm. He admired the beautiful flowers and attractive

sculpture, pausing for a while to soak up the restful sound of the large marble fountain, but even that soothing sound, one that was always the best way to calm his nerves, failed to relax him.

As he entered the house he saw the dishes drying in racks in the kitchen, passed through the now clean dining room and ballroom, and made his way up the stairs to his room. He noticed the light coming out of the keyhole in Erina's room, but decided to let her bask in her triumph of the night. His unsettled nerves would serve her no good and just rob her of some of her victory.

Borrin awaited him in his room, and after helping him to get undressed, said, "Are you through with me tonight, master?" in his low and raspy basso.

Pavel said, "Yes, I'm going to read for a while before retiring. You may go. Remember I have an early day tomorrow."

"Yes, sir. And thank you. Very nice party tonight."

"Thank you, Borrin."

Borrin backed out of the room and secured the door, and Pavel heard his manservant's distinctive limp going down the hall and then down the stairs to his quarters located at the other end of the vast house.

Pavel sat down to read, but couldn't concentrate. Then he looked up to see a figure standing in the door of his closet: a tall and broad body dressed in a robe and coarse trousers with heavy boots and dark gloves.

In a breathy rasp, more a whisper than a voice, he heard the figure say, "High priest Pavel Rober of House Nemmos, Member of the Order of the Sun and Staff, and murderer of Tobin Weatherchaser, prepare to meet justice."

The man removed his gloves to reveal hands bony and gnarled, not more than skin covering bone and ligament and tendon. The right hand pushed back the hood to reveal the face of Tobin Weatherchaser, his hair and beard tangled and matted and his eyes fierce.

5

Pavel clutched the holy symbol he always wore and said in his best stentorian, service-leading voice, "In the name of the great god Enki I command you to begone, wraith!"

His voice like stones grating on wheat hulls, Tobin chuckled and said, "Your god won't intervene in our business, murderer. This is just between you and me."

Tobin's hand shot out and grabbed Pavel by the throat. The revenant said, "Speak now, and make your peace with your deeds. You don't have long, murderer."

Pavel gasped, "I did it for Erina. She deserved better than life as a craftsman's drudge."

"Liar. I know why you did it. I know everything. Confess anything you need to before going to the judgment you so richly deserve, murderer. I'll deal with my former wife after I'm done with you."

Pavel sagged. This creature of death was implacable. He felt the grip slowly tightening on his neck.

Pavel said, "I have nothing to confess."

Tobin said, "Then die, murderer!"

Pavel struggled as Tobin's other hand reached up and encircled his throat. He kicked and swore and tried to break free, but Tobin's hands would not be moved. The edges of his vision started to go black as sight narrowed into a tunnel.

With his last breath Pavel, High Priest of Enki, said, "I'm sorry."

Tobin twisted his hands, and a crack rang out in the room as Pavel's neck snapped. Tobin took the body of his murderer and laid it by the fireplace, stoked up the fire, and tossed it in.

He rasped out, "One down, one to go."

6

Erina looked down at Nordack, her current favorite among the artists. He was so young, so innocent of the things life would steal from him, and so idealistic. That is why she liked him, and why she risked trysting with him even though her

husband could cast a spell and find out about her infidelity. But Pavel was always so cold, and she needed the fire of the passion of the young artisans. No matter how much she valued Pavel's influence and station, she always missed the passion Tobin roused in her.

She kissed Nordack, then said, "You must go, my love. We can't let my husband see you here in the morning."

The ash-haired painter moaned and rolled out of her bed, then started putting on his tights, boots, and doublet.

Erina heard a thump in her husband's room. With fear in her voice, she said, "Hurry, lover, get away before he finds you or you'll not live this night through."

Nordack grabbed his cloak and belt and kissed her once more on the lips before saying, "It was lovely as always, my beloved. Till we meet again, your kiss will be on my lips."

He slipped out of the door and down the stairs, and moments later she heard him leave the house through the door under her balcony. She glanced out the window and watched him make his way through the garden.

She turned and saw a man-sized shape behind her. She said, "What is it, husband, can't sleep?"

The grating rasp made her breath catch. It wasn't Pavel's smooth baritone.

"I'll sleep soon now, my wife. And so will you."

She spun about, then felt her voice catch in her throat. Tobin. He looked horrible. And He looked angry, with a fury she'd never dreamt his kind face could hold.

Tobin said, "Lady Erina Fessal Weatherchaser Nemmos, murderess, I stand here to bring you justice between us. You collaborated with your recently deceased husband, High Priest of Enki Pavel of House Nemmos, to murder me. I am here to deliver your doom."

Erina bowed her head. She knew the lore, and she knew she couldn't escape her husband.

As Tobin stepped forward she said, "Tobin, I never stopped loving you."

Tobin stopped in his tracks and said, "You speak true."

Erina nodded. "Please, in honor of my love for you, make it quick. I surrender myself to your justice. I have wronged you, wronged you with so great a wound I can never repay it but with my life."

Tobin said, "You did not love him."

It was a statement, not a question, but Erina treated it like one. "No, of course not. He was ice to your fire. I have sought warmth from many men to try and recapture what you showed me."

Tobin stepped toward her. "Then why?"

"You're a revenant; you know the answer. You know everything about my mind and heart, or so the legends say."

"Say it."

"Because I wanted power and influence, and you couldn't give that to me. So I had to collaborate with Pavel to have you killed. Everyone thinks he's such a good man, with his donations to help the orphans and his work to help the disadvantaged. But I know his heart, and it's all a show. He does it because he knows it'll make him look good. But he never felt one thing for anyone. Did you know I was just like a prized piece of artwork to him, something beautiful to look at?"

"Yes." Tobin's response was soft, almost human.

Erina said, "So go ahead, release me from the misery of the lie I live. After losing two husbands no one will take me again, at least no one of quality. And all he owns really belongs to the church. So I have nothing now, except my beauty. And without money and influence beauty is only good for the brothels. So take your justice, and free me from all of this. Just be quick."

"No."

Erina's head snapped up. "What?"

"You speak truth, my former wife. And a quick death would be merciful. Though I once loved you, I feel nothing but the rage for vengeance now, and so I cannot give you the easy way out."

Erina fought back the tears. She said, "You would leave me to be a … a whore, a kept woman? Someone who had it all and now has to grovel in the dirt with memories of what I once had?"

Tobin smiled. "Haven't you been doing that already? Goodbye."

Tobin reached his arms up and then shivered, and the clothes fell to the floor, bone dust spilling out of sleeves and pant legs. Erina saw her fate before her, clear and uncertain, and she could no longer staunch the tears. Her power, influence, and station melted away before her eyes, and with it any hope of the love she'd known from her first husband also went with it. She was doomed, and there was no release.

She tried to compose herself, and fighting back the sorrow she recited the old saying, "The justice of a revenant is always most cruel, and most just."

For Further Reading

This monthly column offers reading suggestions for dungeon masters and players alike. This will include books, magazines, web sites, and anything else that might be of interest.

Dragonsfoot has been publishing free O/AD&D materials for nearly 10 years. This thread on their forum, which does not require a membership to read, lists their materials. Warning – it's long, currently 27 pages! ***New Releases at Dragonsfoot:***

http://www.dragonsfoot.org/forums/viewtopic.php?f=11&t=12490

A revised system for ***Clerics Turning Undead*** *was printed in Dragonsfoot's* Footprints *Issue #7.*

http://www.dragonsfoot.org/php4/archive.php?sectioninit=FT&fileid=175

The author revised the article, augmenting the turning table up to cleric level 30. This revised article is hosted on his web site – click on ***Articles*** *in the menu.*

http://www.bkfazekas.com/add/

The Delver's Dungeon hosts an AD&D forum and materials.

http://www.thedelversdungeon.com/

Rended Press maintains an up-to-date list of Old School Zines

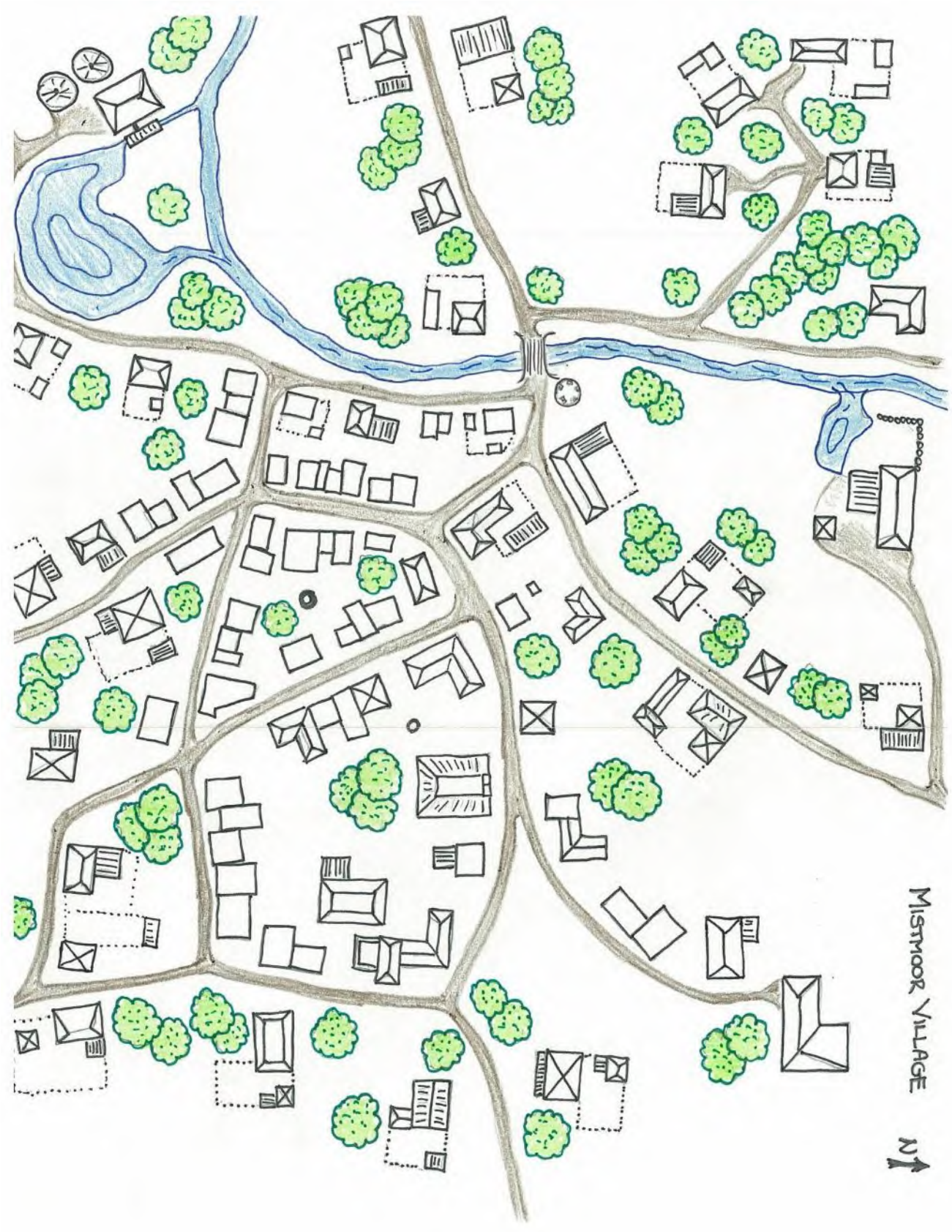
http://rendedpress.blogspot.com/p/old-school-zines.html

The FirstEditdionDND Yahoo! Group is another resource for AD&D. The moderator, Vince, does a good job of keeping spam out of the posts.

http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/FirstEditonDND/

Map 2

By Andrew Hamilton



Each issue of **&** has a theme, and our goal is to ensure that at least 60% of the articles match that theme.

Why?

To give our readers as much of a good thing as we can!

Themes for upcoming issues include:

- Magic Items
- Wilderness Adventures
- ???

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